A survey of artists and literature employing extended multiple mallets in keyboard percussion: Its evolution, resulting techniques and pedagogical guide

Timothy Andrew Jones
University of Nevada, Las Vegas

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A SURVEY OF ARTISTS AND LITERATURE EMPLOYING EXTENDED
MULTIPLE MALLETS IN KEYBOARD PERCUSSION;
ITS EVOLUTION, RESULTING TECHNIQUES
AND PEDAGOGICAL GUIDE

by

Timothy Andrew Jones
Associate Diploma, Jazz
Adelaide University
1994

Bachelor of Music (New), Jazz
Adelaide University
1997

Master of Music
University of Nevada, Las Vegas
2000

A doctoral document submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the

Doctor of Musical Arts Degree
Department of Music

College of Fine Arts
Graduate College
University of Nevada, Las Vegas
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The Dissertation prepared by

TIMOTHY ANDREW JONES

Entitled

A SURVEY OF ARTISTS AND LITERATURE EMPLOYING EXTENDED MULTIPLE MALLET IN KEYBOARD PERCUSSION; ITS EVOLUTION, RESULTING TECHNIQUES AND PEDAGOGICAL GUIDE

is approved in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF MUSICAL ARTS DEGREE
ABSTRACT


by

Timothy Andrew Jones
Dr. Dean Gronemeier, Examination Committee Chair
Professor of Music
University of Nevada, Las Vegas

Extended multiple mallet performance: keyboard percussion performance involving the employment of more than two mallets in one or both hands.

This document aims to explore the evolution of extended multiple mallet performance from the first performers to employ the technique, including the general history of the craft and technical variations, to significant artists, composers and literature. A variety of performance techniques, and grips will be explored in accordance to the literature with pedagogical examples of how certain concepts function. Specific attention will be given to achieving complete independence with six mallets, as can be facilitated with the 'Gronemeier' grip.
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PREFACE

To date, no document exists that explores the important history and literature of extended multiple mallet techniques that are rapidly becoming a part of the keyboard percussionist’s repertoire. During the past forty years more than ninety works have been composed and published specifically employing this technique, the most significant of these during the last decade. Today, many professional artists across the globe perform works employing variations of extended multiple mallet performance. Some of these prominent artists include Keiko Abe (Japan), Ludwig Albert (Belgium), Evelyn Glennie (England), Dean Gronemeier (USA), Rebecca Kite (USA), the Kostowa-Giesecke duo (Germany), Zeferino Nandayapa (Mexico), Robert Paterson (USA), Kai Stensgaard (Denmark), and Karol Szymanowski (Poland).

During the last one hundred years, numerous mallet techniques have been employed to execute the performance possibilities of keyboard percussion instruments. Beginning with the most natural approach, using two mallets, which is an immediate extension of the performers hands, a variety of multiple mallet grips have followed; most of these grips employ four mallets. Four-mallet techniques offer seemingly limitless performance possibilities and have quickly become standardized. Over the years, some artists have explored with varying degrees of success, the possibility of augmenting these four-mallet grips with additional mallets to create even greater opportunities for the performer. These techniques are referred to as extended multiple mallet techniques.
Why use five, six or more mallets? All creative arts are in a constant state of evolution, either by necessity of social surroundings, or by the advancement of innovative individuals who further their craft by exploring new territory. Keyboard percussion has been evolving in western society for over a century, and through a natural process certain limits have been achieved, furthered and recreated. One of these is the exploration of how many mallets can be manipulated successfully while maintaining musical integrity. Another reason for performing with extended multiple mallets is simply that it can be done, and done well. It is impressive, exciting and offers a challenge.

This document focuses on the inception and developments surrounding extended multiple mallet techniques. The greatest developments in extended multiple mallet techniques have occurred with the marimba and to a lesser extent the vibraphone. Furthermore, six-mallet techniques are more often applied to the marimba and five-mallet techniques to the vibraphone.

Three periods can be applied to the development of extended multiple mallet techniques, and as with the development of anything new, each period is received with a different attitude. The first period, between c.1915 and c.1975, experienced very sporadic experimentation with very few performers having any success with the technique. The general attitude towards the technique, barring one or two artists, was that the technique was fun and a novelty, but not for serious performance. Between the years, 1975 to 1990 there were a number of artists that made a very serious attempt to expand four-mallet playing to make five- and six-mallet performance common practice. The reception was much better in this era, and many professional artists gave the technique serious consideration.
The final period, 1990 to the present (2003) has seen improvements to existing techniques, along with new developments that now have extended multiple mallet performance, earning the respect and acceptance that existing two- and four-mallet techniques enjoy. The most important development in this era is the concept of complete independence and manipulation of all mallets.

Acknowledgments

This document culminates three years of applied study and hard work. It represents only a portion of the wonderful knowledge and experience I have gained during the tenure of my Doctor of Musical Arts Degree (DMA) at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. I thank everyone who contributed their time answering questions, responding to emails, sending music and photographs, and for showing a genuine interest in this very specific area of percussion. This work could not have been completed without the continued support and input from my DMA committee: Dr. Kenneth Hanlon, Mr. Anthony LaBounty, Ms. Mary LaFrance, and Mr. George Stelluto. Dr. Dean Gronemeier, the chair of my DMA committee, has been a tremendous mentor and guide throughout every aspect of my degree program. His attention to detail and promotion of excellence through example are truly appreciated. I also thank my immediate family: Mum, Dad, Dee and Denita, and of course my lovely wife Rachel, for their encouragement and faith in this endeavor. This document is dedicated to my Mum Helen, who frequently reminds me, “With a little hard work and the correct attitude, you can achieve anything.” Many thanks to all who have helped me along the way, your time and thoughtfulness are very much appreciated.
Notes

2 ibid
   a. Traditional grip, crossed, pp 133.
   c. Musser grip, non-crossed, pp 134.
   d. Stevens grip, an improvement of the Musser grip, non-crossed, pp 134.
Although the origins of multiple extended mallet performance cannot be pinpointed to an individual artist or specific date, a few prominent percussionists warrant consideration as contributors to the evolution of this technique. Early xylophonists of the ragtime and vaudeville eras, inventors and developers of new percussion instruments, and percussionists experimenting with tricks, or something ‘catchy,’ for their act may have been the first performers to use five, six or more mallets.

George Hamilton Green

One of the first people who may have explored the possibilities of extended multiple mallet performance is George Hamilton Green (1893-1970). Green was one of the most famous and certainly most outstanding xylophone artists from 1914 (first professional dates) until 1946, when he laid down his mallets in the middle of a recording session never to perform in public again. George was respected for both his impeccable musicianship and his charismatic showmanship. During his musical career, he explored many avenues to enhance the performance and compositional possibilities of the xylophone.

In his endeavor to expand the technical range of the xylophone, it is more than likely that George tried his hand at six- and eight-mallet playing; several articles mention
Green's early attempts. "He would pick up extra mallets to fill out harmonies and sometimes dazzled audiences with stunts of six- and eight-mallets." From Percussive Notes, "Audiences marveled at his practice of picking up extra mallets to fill out the harmonies, and occasionally he would dazzle them with stunts of six and eight mallets."

The origin of these two quotes comes from the United Musician, and read as follows: "He arranges all of his own orchestrations and has many stunts of 3-4-6 and 8 hammers, among them being the "Rosary," "Silver Threads Among the Gold," etc. In many of his arrangements of medleys he can be seen to quickly grab up two extra hammers, so as to complete all the chords, harmony, etc."

When G. H. Green made use of additional mallets in his performances, it was exactly as in the above statements, as a stunt to dazzle the audience. Green took his craft very seriously, and abandoned the practice of using more than four mallets very early in his career, circa 1915-16, to avoid being categorized as a 'showman'; Green considered himself a serious musician. Although, many practice hours must have been applied to achieve the control and co-ordination to manipulate six or eight-mallets, even for a brief display.

Clair Omar Musser

Another prominent artist that may have employed an extended multiple mallet technique early on is Clair Omar Musser. In 1926, Musser invented and built his 'Marimba-Celeste,' a multi-keyboard instrument that incorporated a five-octave marimba-xylophone with a two-octave vibraphone situated in front, creating the impression of a three-tiered organ keyboard. Although, as with G. H. Green, there is no
hard evidence to prove that Musser did perform on this instrument with six mallets. It is reasonable to assume that performance in this manner was at least attempted, if not achieved, due to the structure of the instrument and the photographs of Musser demonstrating his instrument.

Musser was a very inventive and creative person. His striving for excellence in every endeavor allows us to consider that even if this six-mallet grip was simply for a promotional photograph, his nature and creative mind would have figured out how to make it work in a performance capacity.⁶

![A player’s view of the Marimba-Celeste, showing the various pedals that operated the damper bar of the vibraphone as well as those that worked with the built-in amplification system and could be used to raise and lower the volume, much like the pedals on an organ.](image)

Photo 1. C. O. Musser demonstrating performance techniques behind his Marimba-Celeste for a promotional photograph.⁷
Photo 2. Musser’s six-mallet grip enlarged. You can see the additional mallet is inserted in a non-crossed fashion between the ring and outer most fingers; an extension of the 'Musser Grip,' the first non-crossed four-mallet grip which he developed.\textsuperscript{5}

Both George Hamilton Green and Clair Omar Musser were considered to be the finest in their field. They are well known for exploring new possibilities with their instruments and techniques, and for pioneering trends in many areas of percussion that still remain with us. The ideas that did not work out were left by the wayside usually for good reason. However, in some cases the fleeting idea just needed to evolve through time and other creative minds before coming to fruition; such as the case with extended multiple mallet performance.

An important point is that the claims suggesting these two musicians attempted extended multiple mallet performance happened quite early in their careers, before they became established artists. This is important, because many aspiring artists experiment with techniques and musical interpretations to be noticed and to gain an edge over their competition. As they mature into professional artists, they either drop some of their initial technical devices, or develop them more so, consequently become defining attributes. In
the case of G. H. Green and C. O. Musser, they did not use five, six or more mallets to any degree once they embarked on their professional careers.⁹

Keiko Abe

Keiko Abe on the other hand, made six-mallet performance an integral part of her performance career from the very outset. She is the first person that we can seriously credit with developing an extended multiple mallet technique is Japanese marimbaist Keiko Abe. Abe became known internationally in the late 1950s as a promising and innovative marimba artist who would ultimately have a lasting impact on the percussion world. From childhood, maybe as early as 1952,⁸ Keiko Abe found herself playing with two, four and six mallets on the xylophone and marimba. When performing, Abe let the music she performed determine the number of mallets employed. Two-, four- and six- mallet techniques quickly became a natural part of her marimba vocabulary. In 1957, Abe began working in recording studios in Tokyo where she used her multiple mallet abilities to cover a variety of instruments and sounds.¹¹

In the early 1960s, composer Akira Yuyama witnessed a performance of Keiko Abe’s that included six mallets. Through their association, Abe commissioned Yuyama to compose a work for her. This work is the ‘Divertimento for marimba and alto saxophone’ which is scored for six mallets rolling in block chords as accompaniment to the saxophone during one section of the piece.

Abe has continued to use six mallets regularly in her repertoire and has in recent years composed significant works for the technique. The most important of these works are ‘Itsuki Fantasy’, and ‘Wind Across Mountains’; both of these works can be heard on

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her CD ‘Marimba Fantasy’. ‘Prism Rhapsody’, for marimba and orchestra or wind ensemble, also uses six mallets during the first half of the work.

Keiko Abe’s six-mallet technique is based on the traditional cross grip and does not allow for complete independence. The outer and inner most mallets can be manipulated for single note lines, by raising and angling her wrist she may also note by note build a triad chord. The lack of independence is not a problem for Abe as she uses her technique to enhance the existing melody and harmony, and most importantly, to bring out a fuller sound from the marimba. As stated earlier, Abe uses her six-mallet technique due to the musical demands, not for novelty.

Photo’s 3\(^{12}\) and 4\(^{13}\): Keiko Abe’s six-mallet grip

Keiko Abe is still very active as a performer, clinician and recording artist both in Japan and internationally. She teaches marimba at the Toho Gakuan Music School in Tokyo, where many of her students study and learn her six mallet technique. Abe’s contributions to six mallet techniques, the advancement of marimba music and to the instrument itself cannot be over emphasized.
Vida Chenoweth

In the early 1960s, American marimbist Vida Chenoweth began performing some six-mallet marimba literature in her concerts. In the April, 1964 issue of 'Percussionist', there is a brief review of Vida Chenoweth's January 14th, 1964 performance for the Enid Concert Association that featured Robert Chenoweth's 'Etude for six-mallets.' According to the article, this performance is the first six-mallet performance in the United States. "...'Etude' is primarily a technical challenge in its heretofore unheard of six-mallet scoring...six-mallets have never before been attempted by any marimbist in either classical or entertainment performances." At the time that this article was written, Keiko Abe and other Japanese marimbists were not yet known in the United States. Nor was there any compelling evidence that another artist had performed with six-mallets; hence the statement "six-mallets have never before been attempted..."
Notes

1 Percussive Notes (Lawton, OK), Summer 1987.
2 The Mississippi Rag (Bloomington, MN), January 2000.
3 Percussive Notes (Lawton, OK), Summer 1987.
5 Barry Bridwell. Email interview, 20 February 2003, world-wide web.
6 Lucille Breunig. Email interview, 11 Feb 2003, world-wide web.
7 This photograph appeared in ‘The Musser Scrapbook’ Percussive Notes (Lawton OK) April 1999
8 ibid
9 They both considered these techniques to be crude and lacking a serious nature at this time (Authors opinion).
10 Keiko Abe and Chikako Inoue. Email interview, 23 Mar 2003, world-wide web.
11 Rebecca Kite. Email interview, 20 Feb 2003, world-wide web.
12 Keiko Abe. Photograph from arts.endow.gov/artforms/Music/Abe.html, 2003, world-wide web.
13 ibid.
14 Percussionist (Illinois), April 1964.
CHAPTER TWO

IMPORTANT MARIMBA ARTISTS
AND THE TECHNIQUES THEY EMPLOY

Ludwig Albert

Ludwig Albert is a Belgian marimbist who in past years he has studied and performed with Keiko Abe, acted as director of percussion studies at the Royal Conservatory of Music in Antwerp, and is now a professional marimbist and director of various events, including the esteemed Belgium International Marimba Competition. Mr. Albert performs with both six and eight mallets during his concerts, presenting his own compositions and the works of Keiko Abe.

Ludwig Albert’s six-mallet technique is based on the traditional cross grip, and is similar to that of Keiko Abe’s.¹ When performing, he has independent control of the outer and innermost mallets, can execute double stops with any two adjacent mallets and play block chords with all three mallets simultaneously. A variety of voicings are available to Albert with this technique, although large intervals either side of the middle mallet are quite difficult.
Photo 5: Ludwig Albert’s six-mallet grip.

Mr. Albert’s eight-mallet technique is unique and very much more involved than most six-mallet techniques. To create the grip, an additional mallet is held with the little finger in each hand to augment the existing six-mallet grip. His marimba solo “Marimba Moods for Eight Mallets” demonstrates many of the possibilities that can be achieved with this technique.

Photo 6: Eight-mallet grip as applied by Ludwig Albert.
Evelyn Glennie

Evelyn Glennie is internationally recognized as one of today’s finest percussionists. She is one of only a handful of percussionists whose career revolves around solo performances. Ms. Glennie has a number of six-mallet works that she performs in her repertoire. Her technique is based on the Burton cross grip, which she explains can be applied to both block chords and independent strokes.\(^5\)

Ms. Glennie performs a variety of six-mallet pieces including Yuyama’s ‘Divertimento for Marimba and Alto Saxophone,’ Thea Musgrave’s marimba concerto ‘Through a Japanese Landscape,’ which she premiered, and Keiko Abe’s ‘Prism Rhapsody.’\(^6\) Concert reviews state that Glennie performs the six-mallet section of Keiko Abe’s ‘Prism Rhapsody’ with command and conviction while still maintaining her natural fluid motion and musicality behind the marimba.\(^7\)

Kostowa-Giesecke Duo

The Kostowa-Giesecke Duo (marimba and vibraphone instrumentation) consists of Mark Andreas Giesecke and Wesella Kostowa who reside and perform primarily in Germany. Both of these artists perform with five and six mallets, employing two differing grips. The first grip, which allows for more independence, is based on the Stevens grip, the second, carrying more strength, is based on the Burton/Friedman/Samuel’s grip.\(^8\) Details for their technique are outlined in the duo’s ‘6-Mallet Compendium’\(^9\) along with many exercises and etudes.\(^10\)

The initial development of the Kostowa-Giesecke Duo’s five and six mallet technique began in the early 1990s and has continued to be an integral part of their performances to
the present. Furthermore, Mr. Giesecke has experience as an improviser, and occasionally solos with six mallets during open sections in some works, and in jazz oriented pieces.¹¹

Rebecca Kite

Rebecca Kite currently has five extended multiple mallet pieces in her repertoire, two of which she has commissioned. Her technique is based from the Musser grip, a non-crossed grip, with the additional mallet inserted across the two existing mallets at a ninety-degree angle. All fingers except the index finger and thumb grip this mallet. This mallet can be manipulated to a certain degree with the little finger and ring finger.¹²

Ms. Kite is also a supporter of new and diverse composers. She has commissioned a number of works for four, five and six-mallet techniques in jazz, classical and contemporary styles. The most recent of Kite’s commissions, ‘Circe’ by Evan Hause, can be considered one of the most challenging works ever composed for six mallet marimba. This unique piece is a contemporary work in which the marimbist must contort his or her body and mallets quickly from small to large intervals with rapid interval changes; Rebecca Kite premiered this work early in 2003.¹³
Robert Paterson

Marimbist Robert Paterson developed his six-mallet technique in 1988 almost by accident. In an effort to demonstrate a musical impression of a 'merry go round' to some friends, he jokingly picked up six mallets and proceeded to play. Shortly after, he realized that this idea had serious potential and began experimenting with a variety of techniques to manipulate the mallets. The grip that he finally developed is an augmentation of the Burton cross grip.\textsuperscript{14}

Photo 8: Robert Paterson's grip, right hand\textsuperscript{15}
After years of refining, Mr. Paterson has developed independence with each mallet and can play any combination of two mallets; he can also play one-handed rolls. In general, rolls are easier to execute if played with the outside mallets with this technique because of the natural motion of the hand when rotating from side to side.

Mr. Paterson’s description of how to hold the mallets for performing with his technique is as follows:

Positioning of three mallets in the right hand. Stand in front of a flat surface (e.g. a table, counter, etc.) and invert your right hand, with fingers extended, so it is palm-side up.

Place the inner mallet against the palm, between the index finger and the middle finger. Rest the mallet head on the flat surface. The mallet should rest outside the hand pad of your thumb. Leave a quarter inch of the outer mallet shaft end hanging over edge of the palm of your hand.

Place the middle mallet on top of the outside mallet. Grip your fingers around the middle mallet and press your ring finger against the outer mallet. At this stage, your thumb and index finger should be gently gripping the middle mallet. A quarter inch of the middle mallet shaft-end should be hanging over edge of the palm of your hand.

With your thumb and index finger still gently gripping the middle mallet, open your other three fingers. Place the outer mallet across the middle mallet and the first joint of your thumb. Close your other three fingers around the inner mallet and press your ring finger against the outer mallet. A quarter inch of the inner mallet shaft-end should be hanging over the edge of the palm of your hand.

Flip your hand over. You should now be holding three mallets in your right hand. Repeat the same process with your left hand, so that it mirrors your right hand.

Robert Paterson is not only recognized as an established marimbist, but notably as a composer. Although his compositions cover a broad range of musical styles, he has a particular interest in composing works that feature or include six-mallet marimba parts. At the time of this document, Paterson has ten available works involving six mallets.
six-mallet method book expected to be released by the end of 2003 and works featured on a number of recordings.

Mr. Paterson has been instrumental in the commissioning of six-mallet works for solo marimba and for his violin and marimba duo ‘The Paterson Duo’; he has also composed six-mallet works for other marimba artists.17

Linda Pimentel

Linda Pimentel is considered a pioneering figure in the development and acceptance of multiple extended mallet techniques. With a musical foundation in piano, Ms. Pimentel transferred piano literature and performance practice concepts to the marimba in an effort to increase her repertoire. Her multiple extended mallet techniques were developed prior to influences of formal instruction and evolved primarily as an attempt to bring attention to the marimba as a serious solo instrument.18

When performing, Ms. Pimentel includes variations of a single mallet in one hand and three in the other, two in one hand and three in the other, and the now somewhat conventional three mallets in each hand. Ms. Pimentel developed her unique technique during the 1960s as a natural extension of four-mallet performance. She also switches freely among variations of the Musser, Burton and traditional cross grips within and from one work to another.19

The development of each applied position of Ms. Pimentel’s technique stem directly from performance situations and reflects her intent to maintain the integrity of the music. Throughout the 1970s and early 1980s Linda Pimentel promoted, composed, commissioned and arranged works for extended multiple mallets; a number of works
were also composed for, and dedicated to her. During her time as contributor to the 'Percussionist' (her column was the 'Marimba Bar', 1970s and the 'Marimba Exchange' early 1980's), Ms. Pimentel included detailed descriptions about her five- and six-mallet technique. In the Fall 1976 issue of the 'Percussionist' she explains through text, photographs and diagrams, how to manipulate five and six mallets based from the traditional cross grip, as well as the Burton and Stevens grips.

Photo 9 is an example of Linda Pimentel’s six-mallet grip based on the traditional cross grip. Photo 10 is a variation of the grip in photo 1, based on the Burton grip. Photo 11 is one of the unusual augmentations of Ms. Pimentel’s grip for wide mallet spreads. The final example, diagram 1, shows the basic mallet positions that Ms. Pimentel employs.
Photo 10^{21}
Michael Rosen

Michael Rosen has been an avid promoter of new musical styles and concepts for the marimba for many years. In the early 1970s, he was one of the first American marimbists to perform and promote Japanese marimba music in the United States when he received a copy of ‘Torse III’ from Akira Miyoshi. The necessity to execute five note chords in this particular piece of music led him to explore in greater detail the possibilities of five and six-mallet performance. Mr. Rosen’s technique is based from the Musser grip with the additional mallet superimposed across the mallet held with the index finger and thumb.

Mr. Rosen performs a number of works with six mallets and includes some four-mallet works that he has either arranged or adapted for six mallets. One example of his adapted repertoire is the first movement of Gordon Stout’s ‘Mexican Dances’ in which the fifth of the chord is added in the middle section to fill the harmonic structure.
Kai Stensgaard

Kai Stensgaard is a Danish percussionist who has been performing with six mallets since 1987. His technique is based on the independent four-mallet Stevens grip and is very similar to the ‘Gronemeier grip’, which will be analyzed in chapter four. The works that he performs are his own compositions or arrangements. Stensgaard’s technique commands independence between the outer and innermost mallets in each hand and some movement with the middle mallets. He makes effective use of the additional mallets to broaden the harmonic structure and chord voicing in his solo works; he is also able to sustain one-handed rolls.
Brian Zator

Brian Zator is currently director of percussion studies at Texas A&M University-Commerce. He first learned to play six mallets when he was a member of the Cavaliers Drum and Bugle Corps. The technique that he learned was the ‘Gronemeier’ technique (discussed in chapter four) which he still employs today with minor variations. Zator was introduced to this technique through the percussion designer and caption head of the Cavaliers Drum and Bugle Corps, Brian Mason (1994). He was also featured as a marimba soloist, playing six mallets, throughout the 1995 DCI solo competition season.32

Brian Zator has been performing with six mallets since 1995 in the marching genre, in solo recitals and clinics throughout Texas. As director of percussion studies at Texas A&M, he has in recent years introduced this technique successfully to several of his students. Zator has also furthered the appreciation of six-mallet performance with the general public and in the percussion world.33
Notes

1 Ludwig Albert. Email interview, 21 August 2002, world-wide web.
2 Photograph from www.ludwigalbert.com
3 Ludwig Albert’s six and eight mallet works both appear on his CD “Marimba Paraphrases.” More information about Mr. Albert, his techniques, CD’s and compositions are available on his website www.ludwigalbert.com
4 Author’s own photograph.
6 Extensive information about Evelyn Glennie and her many recordings can be viewed on her website www.evelyn.co.uk/
7 Review from www.evelyn.co.uk/
8 Mark Andreas Giesecke. Email interview, 20 March 2003, world wide web.
9 Edition Swiss Music, 1995
10 The duo has a number of CD’s available, pieces and method books, all of which are available through their website www.wesamark.de
11 ibid.
12 Rebecca Kite. Description of grip, letter to author, August 2002.
13 Detailed examples and a step by step slide show demonstrate Ms. Kite’s six mallet technique on the GP Percussion website: www.gppercussion.com/html/masterclass.html
15 Photograph for www.robertpaterson.com
17 Extensive information about Robert Paterson and his works can be found on his website http://www.robertpaterson.com
18 Linda Pimentel. Email interview, 9 March 2003, world-wide web.
19 ibid.
20 Pimentel, Linda.
21 Linda Pimentel’s extended multiple mallet etudes can be found in the “Bar Percussion Solo Notebook Vol. Two”, and in the “Solo Marimbist Volume Two”.
22 Photograph from the ‘Percussionist’, Fall 1976.
23 ibid.
24 ibid.
25 ibid.
26 Michael Rosen. Email interview, 5 March 2003, world-wide web.
27 ibid.
28 Author’s own photograph.
29 Kai Stensgaard. Email interview, 2 August 2002, worl-wide web.
30 More information about Kai Stensgaard and his works are found on his website www.marimba.dk
31 Photograph from www.marimba.dk
CHAPTER THREE

IMPORTANT VIBRAPHONE ARTISTS AND THE TECHNIQUES THEY EMPLOY

During the 1970s, a number of vibraphone artists began experimenting with new possibilities to enhance their performances in the jazz genre. Some of these artists started exploring five and six note sonorities to produce richer sounding chords for accompanying ('comping') soloists, and a couple introduced multiple keyboards that seemed to instinctively lead to five and six mallet performance.

Although some jazz vibraphone players have continued the art of five and six mallet performance, after circa 1980, most have resigned themselves to two and four mallets. The main reason for this is that sustaining the weight of extra mallets while playing one or more sets of 45 minutes to an hour becomes quite painful. And, while some chords may sound superior with the possibility of additional notes, the interference of additional mallets in general, becomes a hindrance when soloing.

The jazz style itself seems to dictate how the vibraphone performer must approach the instrument. A certain number of notes are desired to retain the quality of many chords, therefore applying at least three mallets. However, during improvisation, where single-note lines are predominant, fewer mallets are usually more effective to express musical ideas fluently. Some improvising situations also allow the performer to 'comp' while soloing. Considering all of this, performing with five and six mallets in general for jazz
and largely improvised genres, may not be the most realistic approach. Although, if applied selectively, playing a ballad, or when ‘comping’ during a modal tune, the additional voices could enhance the piece tremendously.

Les Blachut

Les Blachut is a Polish vibraphone artist who employs five, six and sometimes eight mallets to create certain effects in his performances. Blachut’s grip is based on an inverted Burton grip, and explains why his technique is not an exact and refined craft as much as an opportunity to extend and enhance the harmonic structure of select pieces. He explains that, especially in works by Messaien, overlapping seventh chords in each hand produce the desired ‘impressionistic’ result. This idea can then be directly applied to modal jazz tunes giving the floating effect typical of this style. Although he does not generally improvise while holding the additional mallets, he can execute block chord pentatonic scales successfully.²

Photo 14: Les Blachut’s eight-mallet grip³
Wesley Bulla

Wesley Bulla’s five and six-mallet technique is based on the Burton cross grip. It was developed in 1977 to perform a series of Debussy preludes. The extra mallet is added to the inside of the existing Burton grip, but to the outside of the thumb. This mallet has limited movement as it slides from the base to the tip of the thumb, but the two mallets manipulated by the fingers are very flexible. There are three basic positions of Bulla’s technique from which most chord augmentations are playable.

In his 1992 thesis, ‘The Development, Adaptation, and Educational Applications of Expanded, Five- and Six-Mallet, Solo Vibraharp Techniques,’ Bulla discusses the many possibilities available to the vibraphone artist employing additional mallets. He refers to mallet positioning on the extreme edges of the bars, placement of mallets for good voicing, honoring the music when playing a transcription, independence and a variety of technical considerations.

Photos 15, 16 & 17: Wesley Bulla’s six-mallet grip
Jean-Claude Forestier

Jean-Claude Forestier is a French percussionist whose primary focus is the vibraphone. In 1978, he began a collaboration with Lionel Hampton (1908-2002) to compile ‘The New Lionel Hampton Vibraphone Method’ which was released in 1981. One of the techniques that Mr. Forestier demonstrates in the book is six-mallet vibraphone performance. The technique demonstrated is based on a cross grip that offers many voicing opportunities, but somewhat limited independence. He includes diagrams, photographs, exercises and etudes to aid the performer learning this technique.

Bill Molenhof

World renowned vibraphone artist, Bill Molenhof experimented with five and six mallets for a number of years during his early career; his technique was based on the Burton cross grip. The biggest draw for Molenhof was the superior sound of some five note chords while ‘comping,’ he also recalls practicing very hard to perform the written portions of his compositions. Although Molenhof developed good control and facility with five and six mallets, countering the weight of the additional mallets quickly took his attention away from soloing which is where he wanted and needed to focus.

For jazz artists, soloing (improvising) accounts for the majority of the performance of ‘standard’ tunes, leaving very little emphasis on the actual written music, the ‘head.’ Some special arrangements may apply more weight to the existing composition, but most performances are meant to feature the spontaneity and creative improvising skills of the artist. The idea of allowing the ‘head’ to determine the number of mallets to be applied to
the rest of the piece did not make any sense, and picking up and putting down mallets frequently also interrupts the performance.⁷

Mr. Molenhof raised another excellent point when speculating about his experience with five and six mallets. He made the comparison to some of the great violinists and pianists approach to performance, that in their endeavor for perfection, some semblance of the natural shape of the hand must be retained to reach the highest level of artistic expression. This has been a very serious goal for Bill Molenhof, and unfortunately, performing with five and six mallets did not allow him that opportunity during extended performances.

Ney Rosauro

Ney Rosauro, one of Brazil's most prominent percussionists, is internationally known for his many compositions for the marimba and vibraphone, and his extraordinary performances. Mr. Rosauro has included a number of five- and six-mallet works in his performance literature since 1985. The first piece that he ever performed and recorded with six mallets was 'Le Polichinelle', a famous piano work adapted by many South American and Mexican marimbists.

Rosauro's most significant contribution to extended multiple mallet performance is his vibraphone solo 'Bem Vindo' (welcome) that employs five mallets, three in the right hand, in the second half of the work. This piece, composed in 1988, has become a standard work for college and professional percussionists. A variety of themes that reference traditional Brazilian songs are present along with a rhythmically strong accompaniment. The piece is dedicated to Rosauro's son, Ricardo G. Rosauro.
Ed Saindon

Ed Saindon experimented with multiple keyboard performance and six-mallet performance in the mid- to late 1970s, opening many new possibilities for the jazz keyboard performer. Saindon’s performances included up to three keyboards played simultaneously (xylophone, vibraphone and marimba) to produce the textural qualities and sounds he was hearing while ‘comping’ and soloing. Due to the expanded range of his three-part instrument, he found it necessary at times to employ six mallets to adequately cover the new solo techniques, dampening and extensive ‘comping’ possibilities.

Karol Szymanowski

Karol Szymanowski is one of Poland’s foremost percussionists and vibraphone artists. Szymanowski is also the creator of a unique six-mallet technique that has received widespread recognition across Europe. He initially developed his technique in 1979 in an effort to further the extended chord structures and rich harmonies that were immediately available with four mallets. This would also lead to accompanying himself in a solo jazz setting on his specialized instrument, a standard vibraphone with an attached bass marimba.

Due to the logistics of percussion keyboard instruments, a problem that all five and six mallet performers encounter is the difficulty of executing certain chord structures. For example, an Eb major chord in root position is nearly impossible to play with three mallets in one hand using the grips currently available. Mr. Szymanowski overcame this dilemma by developing a mallet with an adjustable sleeve that allows the performer to
reduce or extend the length of the mallet to facilitate usually awkward or nearly impossible chords while performing. This specialized mallet is placed between two regular mallets, in traditional grip, in each hand to complete his grip. Szymanowski holds all six mallets every time that he performs, regardless of how many mallets are required to perform a particular piece. He firmly believes that his technique is directly related to his instrument, and should therefore remain consistent and intact at all times.\textsuperscript{10}

Over the past twenty-five years, Szymanowski has mastered his unique instrument and resultant technique. He currently performs throughout Europe and conducts workshops and clinics on the manipulation of ‘four and more mallets’. Along with his live performances, Szymanowski has a number of recorded CDs that feature his compositions and technique. These include ‘Szes´c´si’, ‘Just the two of us’, ‘Jeden Sen’, and ‘Better Than Anything’.\textsuperscript{11}

Photo 18: Karol Szymanowski’s vibraphone with marimba bass\textsuperscript{12}
Karol Szymanowski’s six-mallet grip
Notes

1 Authors note: Jazz performers usually refer to accompanying as ‘comping,’ or to ‘comp.’
2 Les Blachut. Email interview, 28 February 2003, word-wide web.
3 Photograph from www.lesblachut.com
4 Percussive Notes (Lawton, OK), February 1991.
5 ibid.
6 Bill Molenhof. Email interview, 12 July 2002, world-wide web.
7 ibid.
8 Percussive Notes (Lawton, OK), Spring/Summer 1980
9 Karol Symanovski. Email interview, 26 March 2003, world-wide web.
10 ibid.
11 ibid.
12 Photograph courtesy of Karol Szymanowski.
13 ibid.
CHAPTER FOUR

COMPLETE INDEPENDENCE AND A NEW DIRECTION:

THE GRONEMEIER GRIP

In the early 1990’s, Dr. Dean Gronemeier introduced a grip that offered marimbists the possibility of complete independence and unprecedented control with six mallets. The basis of his technique is derived from the Stevens grip, with a cross grip super imposed. This grip provides the marimbist with a great many possibilities and a new challenging direction to take multiple extended mallet performance. It facilitates optimum independence, natural flexibility, easily manipulated mallet augmentations, and the ability to absolutely control the resultant sound.

In John Raush’s review of Gronemeier’s composition ‘Tied By Red’ in ‘Percussive Notes’ April 1996, Raush makes the following statement supporting Gronemeier’s technique, the influence it will ultimately have on the development of the marimba, and six-mallet performance.

As one considers the viability of six mallet repertory, the key to its attraction to those writing for the instrument may well be the ability of marimbists to conquer the limitations of the grip, so that musical ideas are not severely compromised by technical considerations. One hopes that Gronemeier, who already has begun to disseminate information about his approach to six mallet performance (as at PASIC ’95) will continue the process of helping mallet players confront this new frontier. —John R. Raush
The question most commonly asked when witnessing a performance of the 'Gronemeier' grip is, '...how do you make the middle mallet work?' This question is somewhat of a misconception, for manipulating the middle mallet is not really the problem. This mallet should operate and be treated just as if it were the inside mallet of the Stevens grip. The area of concern is really a matter of controlling the 'inactive' innermost mallet so that it does not interfere with the 'active' middle mallet.

With the exception of block chords, no more than two mallets are ever active in each hand at any given time. Using the concept of a 'movable Stevens grip', which moves the Stevens grip from mallets 4 and 6 to mallets 5 and 6, similarly with mallets 1 and 2 to mallets 1 and 3, helps tremendously in understanding and learning the Gronemeier grip. Recognizing which mallet(s) are active and inactive will also become apparent.

There are two basic concepts employed in mastering the manipulation of six mallets, control and strength. The element of control requires learning to manipulate the mallets in any combination simultaneously or together without the inactive mallet(s) interfering. Strength is necessary to sustain the weight of the mallets, and to balance an additional mallet in each hand. Developing the muscles in the forearms, hands and most importantly the middle fingers, through a series of exercises will provide a solid foundation to successfully learn and become comfortable with the Gronemeier grip.
Photo 20: Basic grip, LH: Mallets 1, 2 & 3 - Mallets are labeled left to right

Photo 21: Basic Grip, RH: Mallets 4, 5 & 6
When performing, applying a good piston stroke with each attack is desired regardless of how many mallets strike the bars simultaneously. The piston stroke is achieved by using a stroke analogous to that of bouncing a basketball.\textsuperscript{6} Executed correctly, the piston stroke will result in consistent attacks with full, resonant sounding notes. A sense of the mallets feeling lighter in your hands when in continuous rhythmic motion is also achieved.

Finding the pivot and balance points between mallets 4 and 5 (similarly with mallets 2 and 3) are essential in developing control with six mallets. While holding two mallets with the regular Stevens grip, add the third mallet (mallet 4) underneath and crossing mallet 5, to create the pivot point.

Photo 22: Pivot point, top view.\textsuperscript{7}
To continue the development of Dr. Gronemeier’s technique one must learn the three hand positions and their respective variations that solidify the foundation for advanced six-mallet performance. In his article “Six-Mallet Independence, A New Twist On An Old Idea,” Gronemeier clearly explains the importance of each position and its role. Excerpted from this article are the descriptions of each position.

**FIRST POSITION**

First Position is the most basic position to learn because it is the most natural. Referring to photo 23, mallets 4 and 5 are on the inside of the hand, spread apart from mallet 6, which is on the outside of the hand. First Position is the position most similar to the Musser grip except that two mallets extend from the thumb and index finger instead of one, as in the Musser grip. Also, due to the split between mallets 4 and 5 and mallet 6, the First Position is often set to an intervallic structure in which there is a considerably larger interval between mallets 5 and 6 than there is between mallets 4 and 5. Such is indicated by the natural extension of the hand.
SECOND POSITION

Second Position is formed when the thumb is pressed between mallets 4 and 5, and therefore expands the interval between them. As seen in photo 24, mallets 4 and 5 are not manipulated by the pad of the thumb in Second Position as they were in First Position. Instead, mallet 5 is controlled by the index finger and the inside of the thumb, and mallet 4 is controlled by the index finger and the outside of the thumb. Due to this positioning, Second Position is generally used when equal or nearly equal intervals between mallets 4 and 5 and mallets 5 and 6 are needed.

Often in six-mallet playing, tonal passages lend themselves well to a voicing consisting of the tonic, fifth and octave. This occurs more often in the left hand than the right, as it generally supplies the harmony of a particular passage. This
mallet positioning occurs often enough to warrant its own title of 158 (tonic, fifth, octave) or Expanded Second Position. As can be seen in photo 25, the 158 is achieved by a combination of widening (the distance between) mallet 4 and 6 by pulling mallet 4 with the index finger while maintaining the approximate equal interval with mallet 5 by sliding the thumb up mallet 5.

![Photo 25: 1-5-8, left hand](image)

**THIRD POSITION**

The Third Position is formed when mallet 5 is positioned next to mallet 6, therefore creating a larger intervallic distance between mallets 4 and 5 than between mallets 5 and 6. Due to this rather awkward positioning, playing in the Third Position requires the least natural hand position of all three positions because, as mentioned when describing the First Position, mallets 4 and 5 are held together on the same side of the hand and naturally lay close to each other. To position these intervals, the index finger and pad of the thumb must control mallet 5 by collapsing the index finger towards mallet 6. Refer to photo 26.
When the performer has gained reasonable control over the basic mallet positions, he or she must learn the 'locked' hand positions that are frequently applied in the literature. The locked positions have a direct correlation to the basic positions and are generally applied to passages that use the same position for an extended period of time.

FIRST POSITION SQUEEZE

Along with explaining the basic hand positions used for six-mallet independence, it is important to consider some of the more common manipulations performed within the boundaries of the three positions. First let us consider the hand position locks. The position locks are generally used when the intervals played in any given hand position remain constant for an extended period of time.

Of all the position locks, the First Position Squeeze is the most sensitive due to the minute hand movement used. One may need to employ the First Position Squeeze when playing a consistent interval between mallets 2 and 3 while these mallets are positioned at a sizable intervalic distance away from mallet 1, or if mallets 2 and 3 need to be playing double stops while either playing dependently or independently with mallet 1.

Basically, the squeeze is realized by pulling the index finger down slightly while applying additional pressure to the thumb via the crossed mallets. This additional pressure helps to ensure that the crossed mallets will not slip from their interval. Photo 27 illustrates a common hand position for which the First Position Squeeze is used.
While playing in closed Second Position it is often necessary to employ the Palm Lock. For example, in my piece Distinctive Personality, the performer plays a D-F#-A# augmented triad in the right hand, which serves as the harmony to the left-hand melody. Since this chord is played for an extended period of time with a triplet rhythm, it makes good sense to incorporate the Palm Lock.

The Palm Lock is achieved by squeezing or contracting the muscles of the hand around the previously established Second Position intervals. Be careful, however, not to change the intervals when squeezing; the hand must be locked evenly. Photo 28 demonstrates the sliding of the fingers and the overall manipulation of the hand to hold the Second Position Palm Lock.
THIRD POSITION LOCK

Due to the very unnatural hand positioning used to play in Third Position, it is often necessary to employ the Third Position Lock. This lock is especially called upon when playing a physically demanding passage in Third Position for an extended period of time. In my piece Roccata, for example, the right hand plays nearly the entire piece in Third Position. The part is fast, as it is a toccata tempo, and the right hand has the additional demand of controlling the dynamic nuances.

For additional strength and control, the performer may desire using the Third Position Lock. This lock is achieved by simply putting the index finger above mallet 5 as opposed to below mallet 5 as would be the case in standard Third Position playing. Compare photo 29 to photo 27 to see the alteration. The performer must be aware, however, that when the Third Position Lock is engaged, it is very difficult to change mallet positions rapidly. This technical consideration must be taken into account when choosing between standard Third Position or the Third Position Lock.

Certain intervalic positions on the marimba are extremely difficult to achieve, and sometimes impossible. For example, the major triad in root position Eb -G-Bb does not lend itself to be performed with one hand. Quite simply, the mallets do not shape in the formation necessary to play that chord. Similarly, the major triad Ab -C-Eb is also very difficult to play in root position with one hand; however, this can be done.
The manual ‘pull’, and ‘push’ are again variations of the basic mallet positions. The performer applies these techniques when he or she wants to facilitate the most consistent and resonant area of each bar. Striking the marimba bars close to the nodes results in a thin sound, as opposed to the very round, resonant sound that can be realized when the bars are struck ‘just off center’. Both of these sonorities are valid in marimba performance, but the performer must have the ability to choose which works best in a particular situation.

MANUAL PULL/PUSH

Many difficult triads can be played with some slight alterations of trajectory direction. For example, the root position of D-F#-A can be played by raising the hand and somewhat pulling the mallets towards you. This pulling helps to avoid the nodes on the D and A bars, and a resonant sound can be obtained. Notice in photo 31 that by lifting the hand and pulling, the nodes are avoided for the D and the A. I call this motion the Manual Pull.
Let us consider, for example, the major triad in root position B-D#-F#. In this case, I suggest a slight pushing outward. This push is nowhere near the amount of pull one would use for the Manual Pull, but a slight push helps keep the mallets more stable for better accuracy. I call this motion the Manual Push. Photo 32 illustrates a common mallet position for which the Manual Push would be employed.
A further advantage of the Gronemeier grip is the flexibility to move and adjust the mallets to choose good playing areas, even when executing difficult note configurations and one-handed rolls. This is important, as obtaining the desired tone and expression from the instrument is integral to the overall musicality and execution of any work.
Notes

1 Director of Percussion Studies at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas.
2 Percussive Notes, December 1996... "A New Twist on an Old Idea".
3 Percussive Notes, April 1996
4 Author's own photograph.
5 ibid.
7 Author's own photograph.
8 ibid.
9 Percussive Notes, December 1996.
10 Photograph of Dean Gronemeier's grip by Rachel Julian.
11 ibid.
12 A better understanding of how the 1-5-8 is applied and works will be achieved through the pedagogical exercises in the appendix of this document.
13 Author's note in parenthesis.
14 Photograph of Dean Gronemeier's grip by Rachel Julian.
15 ibid.
16 ibid.
17 ibid.
18 ibid.
19 ibid.
20 ibid.
21 ibid.
A number of Mexican and Guatemalan marimbists use five and six mallets in their music. The details about these performers are not well documented and are hard to trace, but a couple of notable performers warrant immediate mention.

Manuel Vleeschower (1921-2000), is one of the old marimba masters of San Cristobal, Chiapas. He has been reported to perform amazingly with six and eight mallets. He is probably the first to perform with six mallets in Mexico, first demonstrating his skill with his own version of a famous Mexican song 'Perfidia,' by Alberto Dominguez. Manuel was often a feature artist in Chiapan marimba festivals where many people appreciated his talents. He is not only famous for his standard and extended multiple mallet displays, but for also forming marimba schools in Chiapas.

One of the most notable marimba performers in Mexico is Zeferino Nandayapa (born 1931, Chiapas). His family marimba band, 'Marimba Nandayapa,' is known extensively through Mexico, the United States and Europe as one of the most respected and decorated marimba bands in Mexican history. Zeferino’s performances include incredible displays
symposium in Nacogdoches, Texas. Up until that point, he only performed within marimba ensembles.¹

In his recent book ‘Método Para Marimba,’ Zeferino includes detailed descriptions for how to hold and perform with five and six mallets. There are also included, photographs of his technique and several of his compositions. Currently, his compositions are the only original works for five and six mallets published in Mexico. Most of the other literature performed is either Mexican traditional music, or transcribed classical works, especially piano music.

Some other Mexican artists that perform with six mallets include Efraín Paniagua, Israel Moreno, Norberto Nandayapa, Tania Govea and David Lopez (a former student of Dr. Gronemeier). It is reported by Javier Nandayapa, one of Zeferino’s four sons and member of ‘Marimba Nandayapa’, that there are several other Mexican marimbists now performing with five and six mallets.³ One of the most important works in Mexico for

Photo 34: Zeferino Nandayapa’s six mallet grip²
marimbists playing six mallets is Max Hirschfelds' piano arrangement of 'Le Polichinelle,' by Heitor Villa-Lobos. This piece transfers to the marimba for six-mallet performance without the need for editing, or adjustment of the piano arrangement.

The Use of Six-Mallets in Drum Corps

In recent years, there have been a number of attempts to incorporate six-mallet keyboard techniques in the 'front ensembles' of marching percussion ensembles, including highly ranked Drum Corps International (DCI) drum and bugle corps, and subsequently, collegiate and high school ensembles. The main reason for introducing the technique was to present something that other competitors may not be doing, giving the ensemble a slight edge and uniqueness. Therefore, six-mallet performance in front ensembles was perhaps to be used as visual enhancement, rather than for musicality.

The first DCI drum corps to effectively make use of a six-mallet keyboard technique were the Blue Devils in 1990. The technique was used in the chorale section of their show with performance limited to block chords. The technique that the performers employed was a variation of Keiko Abe’s six mallet traditional crossed grip.

On discussing the use of six mallets in more recent drum corps situations with one of the industry’s prominent instructors, Brian Mason, these performances resulted. During the 1995 and 1996 DCI seasons, percussion keyboard players with the Cavaliers Drum and Bugle Corps performed with six mallets to enhance the overall visual component of their respective shows. In 1998, the ‘Phantom Regiment’ also incorporated this technique. Mr. Mason, as percussion designer and caption head in both cases, explained that the main reason for using six mallets was that no other group employed such a
technique. From an educational standpoint, Mason also wanted to promote a new technique and approach to the marimba that most of the performers had never experienced.

The technique and grip of choice in this case was based on the ‘Gronemeier’ grip; Brian Mason was a student of Dr. Dean Gronemeier at this time. In each season that the technique was employed, the performers somewhat struggled to gain absolute control, but comfortably manipulated ‘first’ and ‘second’ positions of the grip. By limiting the use of the technique to chorale style sections, good command was achieved by each performer as far as actual performance was concerned. Unfortunately, in relation to sound, the difference between four and six mallets did not enhance the overall production enough to warrant further use. In all, the desired texture and harmonic colors intended were not perceived to be sufficient when performing outdoors. Therefore, the response to the visual effect from the judges also did not have the impact anticipated.

Ultimately, abandoning the six-mallet technique was based on a variety of factors that included the need for volume in an outdoor setting, the overall effect visually, and the difficulty in learning a demanding technique in a limited amount of time. The acoustic environment, or performance venue, and the number of players performing were where the main problems were found. For example, if one performer in an indoor or controlled environment can produce up to six tones, the aural enhancement and effect is instantaneous. Whereas outdoors, to accomplish the constant need for power and volume, it is far more effective to have the appropriate notes assigned amongst the available players. Performing with two and four mallets is more efficient than everyone playing similarly with six mallets.
To this point, the use of six mallets in the drum corps genre has not proven to have a substantial and lasting effect. Although not immediately discarded when it did not produce the desired results, practicality has more or less precluded it from becoming a mainstay in this area.

In the spring of 2003, Terri Haley, who was a member of the 1990 Blue Devils front ensemble performing with Keiko Abe’s six mallet technique, introduced complete independence with six mallets to her DCI show. Ms. Haley, who is a former student of Dr. Gronemeier, is currently pit arranger and front line instructor for the Troopers Drum Corps. She has been successfully teaching the keyboard players in her current front ensemble both block chords and independent permutations using the ‘Gronemeier’ technique.

Ms. Haley believes she has overcome some of the previous problems encountered by Mr. Mason in 1995/96 and 1998 that will substantiate an impact, and bring validity to six mallet performance in this genre. It will take a number of seasons to truly gauge the success of Ms. Haley’s work, but so far, the results and response have been positive.
Notes

5 Brian Mason. Email interviews, 15-31 July 2002, world-wide web.
6 Sound dissipates quickly when playing outdoors due to the lack of walls and a ceiling to capture and enhance the sound of a musical instrument. Therefore, volume is often used to compensate for that lack of enhanced resonance.
CHAPTER SIX

LITERATURE FOR MULTIPLE EXTENDED MALLET PERFORMANCE

The literature contained in this chapter is, although extensive, somewhat incomplete. Many jazz pieces that may be performed with extended mallet techniques are not included due to their improvised nature. It is also impossible to locate every single work from all continents and composers, especially if the work is not published; therefore, a few works may not appear in this collection. Finally, there is of course music constantly in the process of being composed which will ultimately extend this list.

I have deliberately avoided using graded levels for the following works, as that method can be misleading. I have found that a few brief comments about the content of each piece is the best approach to providing the reader with a realistic insight into the attributes of the works. The works have been arranged alphabetically by composer and include the title, publisher (if available), instrumentation, brief comments and the duration.
ABE, KEIKO


Instrument: Six-mallet marimba solo.

Comments: Unique variation of a Japanese traditional song. Development of rhythmic motives and patterns, comfortable intervals between mallets, short chorale section and exaggerated dynamics.

Duration: 6:20


*Prism Rhapsody for Marimba and Wind Ensemble*

Instrumentation: Two, four and six-mallet marimba solo with orchestra.

Comments: This work is derived from the Conversation in the Forest II and Prism solos. It is in two sections featuring six mallet performance techniques in the first half and an impressive cadenza. A piano reduction is also available.

Duration: 15:30

*Wind Across Mountains* (1992) - currently not published (Xebec)

Instrument: Six-mallet marimba solo.

Comments: Vast dynamic range, explores close note clusters and large interval leaps with strong rhythmic emphasis and melodic phrasing.

Duration: 6:30
ALBERT, LUDWIG

*Let's Dance* (1998) - Beurskens Muziekkuitgeverij

Instrumentation: Six-mallet marimba solo (with pod rattles), player two - congas.

Comments: Rhythmical solo based on a Peruvian folk song. Left hand ostinato, right hand development of the melodic statement, single note and block chord lines.

Duration: 2:45

*Marimba Moods for 8 mallets* (1998) - Beurskens Muziekkuitgeverij

Instrument: Eight-mallet marimba solo

Comments: A simple rhythmic figure carries this solo throughout. Brief eight part chorale, optional improvisation section, single note lines, four six and eight note block chords.

Duration: 6:30

BARBER, CLARENCE

*Intrada and Episode* (1977) - Permus Publications

Instrument: Four (Intrada) and six-mallet (Episode) marimba solo.

Comments: Intrada, short four-mallet chorale. Episode, sixteenth note single voice lines with three note chords briefly 'comping' in the right hand. Dedicated to Linda Pimentel.

Duration: 2:50
BROWNING, LEE

*Turbulent Track* (1997) - currently not published

Instrument: Six-mallet marimba solo.

Comments: Chorale utilizing the 1-5-8 position in both hands. Short independent allegro with independent single strokes.

Duration: 2:00

*Diving In* (1997) - currently not published

Instrument: Six-mallet marimba solo.

Comments: Demanding triplet independence between hands, integrated sextuplet sixteenths.

Duration: 2:00

*September* (1997) - currently not published

Instrument: Six-mallet marimba solo.

Comments: Right hand ostinatos, left hand basic independence, repetitive phrases.

Duration: 1:45

*Reverie* (1997) - currently not published

Instrument: Six-mallet marimba solo.

Comments: Chorale in close voicing and clusters.

Duration: 2:40
Half A World Away (1997) - currently not published

Instrument: Six-mallet marimba solo.

Comments: Chorale mainly in triad and 1-5-8 positions, inner voice moving lines.

Duration: 4:00

BULLA, WESLEY

Danseuses De Delphes (Dance of Delphi) (1977) Claude Debussy, arrangement by W. Bulla - currently not published

Instrument: Five-mallet vibraphone solo, 2 left hand, 3 right hand.

Comments: Extra mallet allows doubling notes in order to maintain the colour and texture of the original. Both hands play melody as well as accompaniment; must maintain smooth internal movement of center mallet in the right hand.

Duration: 2:30

La Fille Aux Cheveux De Lin (The Girl with the Flaxen Hair) (1977) Claude Debussy, arrangement by W. Bulla - currently not published

Instrument: Five-mallet vibraphone solo, 3 left hand, 2 right hand.

Comments: Technically an innovative arrangement, the player must use the entire instrument including the outer edges of the bars as well as mallet dampening and pianistic style pedaling. Requires light fluid motion with extensive use of dampening techniques.

Duration: 2:00
La serenade interrompue (The Interrupted Serenade) (1977) Claude Debussy, arrangement by W. Bulla - currently not published

Instrument: Six-mallet vibraphone solo.
Comments: Left hand ostinatos throughout, sometimes filling in with the right hand melody, articulation and pedaling considerations, constantly moving lines.
Duration: 4:00


Instrument: Six-mallet vibraphone solo.
Comments: Chordal and double stop movement in both hands, complex rhythmic structure, pedaling and dramatic dynamic changes.
Duration: 2:00

Minstrels (1977) Claude Debussy, arrangement by W. Bulla - currently not published

Instrument: Five-mallet vibraphone solo, 2 left hand, 3 right hand.
Comments: Left hand carries the melody while the right executes a ‘grace’ figure; forces the player to use the inside right hand mallet to play parts of the melody.
Duration: 2:30
CHENOWETH, ROBERT


Instrument: Six-mallet marimba solo.


Duration: Not Known

DOTSON, JAMES

*Ritual* (1977) - Southern Music Company

Instrument: Four-mallet (three in LH, one in RH) marimba solo.

Comments: Left hand maintains a triad ostinato throughout, short chorale. Dedicated to Ernest Muzquiz.

Duration: 3:00

STACEY GARROP

*Womansongs* (1998) - self-published by the composer

Instrument: Mezzo-soprano and six-mallet marimba duet.

Comments: Moderately difficult, one-handed rolls, dead strokes, block chords, rolled chords.

Duration: 14:00

GIESECKE, MARK ANDREAS and W. KOSTOWA

Comments: 57 pages of technical exercises that develop mallet placement, block chords movement among mallets in both hands, chord inversions and mallet independence. Includes diagrams, descriptions, and a collection of five etudes developing specific areas of six-mallet performance.

**Alpha**

Instrument: Six-mallet marimba solo.

Comments: Basic independence, arpeggiated single notes and double stops.

Duration: 0:30

**Beta**

Instrumentation: Six-mallet marimba solo.

Comments: Hand to hand three note clusters in rhythmical sixteenth note patterns.

Duration: 0:25

**Gamma**

Instrument: Six-mallet marimba solo.

Comments: Left hand triad accompaniment, right hand ostinato melody, dead-strokes.

Duration: 0:45

**Delta**

Instrument: Six-mallet marimba solo.

Comments: Continuous hand to hand sextuplets in triad form.
Duration: 0:20

Zeta

Instrument: Six-mallet marimba solo.

Comments: Arpeggiated two mallet solo with one hand three-note chords interspersed within the accompaniment.

Duration: 0:45

GREGORY, PAUL SAN

Into Mist (1996) - currently not published

Instrumentation: Harp and six-mallet marimba duet.

Comments: Fairly difficult, one-handed rolls, two-handed rolls, block Chords, involved mallet independence. For Robert Paterson.

Duration: 7:30

GRIFFITH, JOAN


Instrument: Four and five-mallet marimba solo - 2nd mvt. Five mallets.

Comments: Second movement, December’s Ballad, is a five-mallet chorale, 3 in the left hand and two in the right. Features four types of rolls, mandolin, traditional, Musser and independent (the execution of these roll-types are explained in the performance notes for the work). Evokes the stride piano style. Commissioned by Rebecca Kite
Duration: 10:30

GRONEMEIER, DEAN

2HT2HDL (1996) - Grone Publications

1. Game Risk
2. Trouble In Somewhere
3. Single Man’s Aggression

Instrument: Six-mallet marimba solo.

Comments: Probably the most demanding of Gronemeier’s works for six mallets. This piece is a continuous development of difficult permutations, fast interval changes and physically demanding grooves. It requires a great deal of control among mallets and athletic movement behind the marimba. The extremes of each ‘technical position’ are intertwined with recurring themes throughout the three-movement work.

Duration: 18:00

115th Psalm (1995) - currently not published, available on request from Grone Publications

Instrumentation: Duet for baritone voice and marimba performed with four and six-mallets. Percussion ensemble accompaniment (seven players).

Comments: Text for the baritone comes directly from Biblical verses 1 - 18 of the 115th Psalm. The marimba part is majestic and powerful, involves complex four
mallet permutations, and commands a great deal of strength from the marimbist in the six mallet sections.

Duration: 16:00

*Coming Home* (1997) - Grone Publications

Instrument: Six-mallet marimba solo.

Comments: A one movement work that includes chorale passages, arpeggiated independence between hands, ostinato grooves, advanced one-handed melodic developments, and a physically demanding final groove section.

Duration: 10:00

*Five Short Works* (1994) - Grone Publications

Instrument: Six-mallet marimba solos.

Comments: Five works which may be played as individual solos, or together as a complete series. Each work focuses on a complete area of six-mallet performance within a musical setting.

Duration: 18:00

*Genesis*

Comments: Develops ‘first position’ of the ‘Gronemeier’ technique, incorporating one handed rolls, left hand ostinato accompaniment and single note lines.
Cloud Mist

Comments: A chorale in root position triads with some use of ‘first’ and ‘second’ position chords in comfortable intervals. Develops proper hand shape for six mallets and control of rolls.

Distinctive Personality

Comments: Development of one-handed chords in a terraced fashion, fast triplet groove accompaniment to the scale like melody. Both hands trade off playing the accompaniment and melody; athletic workout.

Which Hunt?

Comments: A haunting chorale entirely in the ‘1-5-8’ position. The expanded intervals and continuous rolls develop strength and muscle control. One handed and hand to hand rolls.

Rocatta

Comments: Develops the difficult ‘third position lock’ in both hands, unrelenting sixteenth notes; played with an underlying rock groove at a fast toccata tempo.


Instrument: Six-mallet marimba solo
Comments: The battle between man, Satan and temptation are expressed through intricate and dark themes in this work. A barrage of power and musicality are realized through complex permutations, sudden outbursts of dissonance, a majestic chorale, and driving grooves.

Duration: 11:00

HAKI, MICHEL

*Aux Animaux* (1979) - Publisher unknown

Instrumentation: Marimbas, two performers, each employing four to six-mallets.

Comments: An unusual piece using both standard and non-standard notation. The standard notational sections are interesting and carefully constructed. The non-standard sections leave room for interpretative freedom. Haki suggests the composition is “an abstraction of an idea”: “the serious relationship of man to animal(s).”

Duration: determined by improvisation in the performance.

*Stunts and Traces* (1997-98) - Non Sequitur Music

Instrumentation: Six-mallet marimba solo with tape.

Comments: Four movements, difficult, extensive mallet switching and independence, rhythmically complex.

Duration: 10:45
HAMPTON, LIONEL and Jean-Claude Forestier


Instrument: Vibraphone.

Comments: A method book focusing largely on two and four mallets, but includes six-mallet exercises, études, and descriptions of mallet manipulation and detailed photographs.

HAUSE, EVAN


Instrument: Six-mallet marimba solo.

Comments: Commissioned by Rebecca Kite, 'Circe’ is an amazing contemporary marimba composition displaying virtuosity throughout. The mallet permutations are extremely difficult and the harmonic augmentations require the marimbist to be flexible and athletic. This work is for the marimbist with advanced experience performing with six mallets.

Duration: 10:00

HIRSCHFELD, MAX


Instrument: Six-mallet adapted marimba solo.
Comments: Famous piano work that has been adopted by many Mexican marimbists for six mallets. Mostly block chords, hand to hand movement and single note lines.

Duration: 3:00

HIXON, SHIRLEY

Two Scenes for Marimba (1976) - Permus Publications

Instrument: Six-mallet marimba solo.

Comments: Two movements ‘Flaming Dawn’ and ‘Portrait of Twilight’ both in a chorale style. With the exception of two articulated measures the entire work is rolled; interesting harmonic structure; limited mallet independence.

Duration: 6:00

JENNY, JACK

Ethos (1978) - Permus Publications

Instrument: Six-mallet marimba solo.

Comments: Dedicated to Linda Pimentel, a moderately paced solo using mallet augmentations typical of Ms. Pimentel’s six-mallet technique; constantly evolving time signatures, close voicings, ending with a slow chorale. Directions for mallet configuration also included.

Duration: 4:00
JONES, TIMOTHY

*A Little Italian Song* (2001) - sixmallets@hotmail.com

Instrument: Six-mallet marimba solo.

Comments: Develops basic mallet manipulation, one and two-handed rolls.

Duration: 1:30

*Tied by Red*, Dean Gronemeier, ensemble arrangement by Tim Jones (2001) - sixmallets@hotmail.com

Instrumentation: Six-mallet marimba solo with percussion ensemble accompaniment (four percussionists).

Comments: Groove oriented work, advanced independence, difficult permutations, aggressive performance demands, close and extended intervals, only minor variations from the original marimba solo.

Duration: 12:00

*Tarantella* (2003) - sixmallets@hotmail.com

Instrument: Six-mallet marimba solo.

Comments: Tarantella dance rhythms blended with a Tom Waits style melody; advanced independence, one handed rolls; begins and ends with rolled chorale sections.

Duration: 7:00

*Wooden Devil* (2000) - sixmallets@hotmail.com

Instrument: Six-mallet marimba solo.
Comments: Groove oriented solo based on a simple developing theme; chorale sections; advanced independence and endurance.

Duration: 8:00

KOSTOWA, WESSELA


Instrument: Six-mallet marimba solo.

Comments: Short chorale using first, second and third inversion chords; triplet and sextuplet independent lines. Dedicated to Mark Andreas Giesecke.

Duration: 2:00

LEFKOWITZ, DAVID

*Miniature V: All At One Point* (1992) - Floating Point Music

Instrument: Six-mallet marimba solo.

Comments: Extremely difficult, mixed mallet sonorities, yarn 1/3 and 4/6, super ball 2 and 5; never more than four mallets struck at once but all six mallets used for different colors, extensive moves from center of bars to nodes. For Robert Paterson.

Duration: 8:00

McCLOUD, DANIEL

*Somewhere In-between* (1998) - available from the composer

Instrument: Four and six-mallet marimba solo.
Comments: ABA form; technical six-mallet B section that requires control and advanced independence.

Duration: 5:30

*Transitions* (1997) - available from the composer

Instrumentation: Six-mallet marimba solo with piano accompaniment.

Comments: Continuously rolled chorale; may be performed with optional string quartet instead of original piano accompaniment.

Duration: 4:00

MARGOLIS, BOB

*Three Technical Sketches* (1977) - Manhattan Beach Music

Instrument: Four and five-mallets, five-mallets in movement one.

Comments: The first movement, 'March (Hand Crossings)' invokes a three note left hand pedal while the right hand commands a rhythmical melody. Some interesting scale runs and performance directions. Third place winner in the 1981-82 Percussive Arts Society Composition Contest, written for marimbist Matthew Becker.

Duration: 5:30

MELLITS, MARC

*Paranoid Cheese* (2001) - self-published by the composer

Instrumentation: Violin and marimba employing four and six-mallets.
Comments: Six movements, only one movement ("wedge IV") uses six-mallets. The movement is in a rolled chorale style using mostly six note chords. Commissioned by the Paterson Duo.

Duration: 15:00

MIYOSHI, AKIRA

_Torse III_ (1964) - Ongaku.

Instrument: Four and five-mallet marimba solo, five-mallets in last movement.

Comments: Composed for Keiko Abe, somewhat atonal work with dramatic dynamic changes; unexpected leaps and sporadic rhythms. Five mallets are required in the final movement, but may also be applied to the three note chords in movements one and three. Commissioned by Keiko Abe.

Duration: 7:30

MUSGRAVE, THEA

_Through a Japanese Landscape_ (1994) - Novello & Co Ltd.

Instrument: Marimba Concerto with Wind Orchestra.

Comments: A four movement work based on a series of Haiku, Japanese philosophy and art, and nature's seasons. The marimbist introduces each season (mvt.) with different chimes: bamboo for spring, wood for summer, metal for autumn and glass for winter. The piece incorporates one handed rolls, full range of the five-octave marimba, six-mallets in 'autumn' and free floating time textures. First performance featured Evelyn Glennie as marimba soloist.

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Duration: 23:00

NANDAYAPA RALDA, ZEFERINO


Comments: A complete method for the Mexican style of marimba performance for two, four and six-mallets. Discusses the role of each member of the ‘marimba band’, construction of the instruments, how to overcome various logistical problems, the art of tuning resonators, solo performance, classical and improvising considerations and mallet selection. Development exercises in all areas, etudes and complete works. The following six-mallet works are included.

*Baguetofonías*

Instrument: Six-mallet marimba solo.

Comments: A fast paced solo in block chord triads, three against two cross rhythms, chord changes included; utilises the high range of the instrument.

Duration: 4:00

*Fantasía Profana*

Instrument: Six-mallet marimba or piano solo with orchestra.

Comments: The most complex of Nanayapa’s works, this three movement work requires amazing technical expertise on the part of the marimbist. Each movement segues into the next an involves cadenza-like single note lines; heavily
syncopated rhythms, groove sections, ostinatos and a self-accompanied chorale.

Duration: 6:30

*Marimboleando*

Instrument: Six-mallet marimba solo.

Comments: Single note lines and block chord melody, syncopation and development of a rhythmical theme; chord changes included.

Duration: 2:00

*Nandacacué*

Instrument: Six-mallet marimba solo.

Comments: Time signature transitions, syncopated rhythms, augmentations of the block chord triad, one handed rolls, fast runs of block chord, six note harmony and fast sixteenth note scale ending.

Duration: 6:00

OSTERFIELD, PAUL

*Phantasmal Dawn* (1998) - self-published by the composer

Instrumentation: Violin and six-mallet marimba duet.

Comments: Difficult. Some mallet switching, alternating hands, fairly difficult rolls.

Commissioned by the Paterson Duo.

Duration: 7:00
PATERSON, ROBERT


Instrumentation: Violin and six-mallet marimba duet.

Comments: Medium level of difficulty. Extensive use of alternating outer mallets 1/3 and 4/6; block chords; large rolled section, two-handed rolls, stick clicks on the edge of the bars. Composed for the Paterson Duo.

Duration: 7:30

*Duo for Flute and Marimba* (1998-99) - Robert Paterson Music (ASCAP)

Instrumentation: Flute, doubling alto flute and piccolo, and marimba employing four, five and six-mallets.


Duration: 15:00

*Fantasia for Tuba & Marimba* (1992) - currently not published

Instrumentation: Tuba and six-mallet marimba duet.
Comments: A difficult work employing mostly five-mallets, some use of six-mallets. Extensive use of three-note block chords in right hand with intervals in left hand; dead-stroke section.

Duration: 6:00

*Journey into Courage Film Score/Suite* (1994-95) - Robert Paterson Music

Instrumentation: Trumpet, violin, cello, piano, six-mallet marimba, percussion, harp and banjo.

Comments: Basic six-mallet chord structures and lines with the intention of effortless execution. This score was used to accompany the documentary film “Journey Into Courage” (Kingdom County Productions). May be performed in a concert setting as a suite.

Duration: 13:00 (suite)


Instrumentation: Violin and six-mallet marimba duet.

Comments: Medium level of difficulty. Extensive use of alternating outer mallets 1/3 and 4/6, marimshots (striking the bar with the mallet shaft and head simultaneously), clicking and bouncing mallet shafts together, block chords and playing on the nodes. Composed for the Paterson Duo.

Duration: 5:15
Mexican Dance No. 1 (1992) - currently not published
Instrument: Six-mallet marimba solo.
Comments: Gordon Stout/arr. Robert Paterson. Moderately difficult, arrangement of Stout's first dance with additional notes creating a six-mallet piece.
Duration: 3:00

Merry Go Round (1988-90) - Robert Paterson Music
Instrument: Six-mallet marimba solo.
Comments: Robert Paterson's six-mallet technique, works and performances stem directly from this piece. Movement from 'Four Children's Songs'; may be played as a separate piece. Moderate independence and endurance, comfortable intervals and one-handed rolls.
Duration: 5:00

Postludes Nos. 1-3 (1990-93) - Robert Paterson Music
Instrument: Six-mallet marimba solo.
Comments: May be played separately. Each postlude loops from end to beginning, one loops to two, two loops to three; the third postlude is more difficult than first two. Heavy use of alternating one and two mallets in each hand; extensive use of mallets 1/3 and 4/6 as would be played in a four-mallet style.
Duration: 3:00 - each postlude, longer with loops.
**Prisms I and II (1990)** - currently not published

*Instrument:* Six-mallet vibraphone solo.

*Comments:* From 9 Prisms for Solo Vibraphone. Basic mallet manipulations, extensive use of six-note block chords, alternating hand patterns.

*Duration:* 3:00

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**Teddy Bear (1991)** - currently not published

*Instrument:* Six-mallet marimba solo.

*Comments:* A movement from Four Children's Songs. May be played as a separate piece. Advanced independence, alternating hand techniques, alternating one and two mallets in each hand.

*Duration:* 5:00

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**PHIBBS, JOSEPH**

*Spiraling (2001)** - self-published by composer

*Instrumentation:* Violin and six-mallet marimba duet.

*Comments:* Moderately difficult. Fast melodic passages, block chords. Commissioned by the Paterson Duo.

*Duration:* 5:00

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**PIMENTEL, LINDA**

*Blue Zoo (1980)** - Permus Publications

*Instrument:* Six-mallet marimba solo.
Comments: A blues-like etude with movement in the top voice of each block chord. From the ‘Bar Percussion Solo Notebook Vol. Two.’

Duration: 0:30


Instrument: Four-mallet marimba solo, 3 in the right hand, 1 in the left.

Comments: A chorale etude of moving right hand chords over a left hand drone. From the ‘Bar Percussion Solo Notebook Vol. Two.’

Duration: 1:00

*The Happy Farmer* (1976) - Permus Publications

Instrument: Five-mallet marimba solo, 3 in the right hand, 2 in the left.

Comments: Robert Schumann/arr. Pimentel. An etude with left hand moving bass lines, right hand variations on block chords with lines complimenting the melody. From the ‘Solo Marimbist Volume Two.’

Duration: 0:45

*Wild Horseman* (1976) - Permus Publications

Instrument: Six-mallet marimba solo.

Comments: Robert Schumann/arr. Pimentel. An etude developing independence between individual mallets in each hand; block chord accompaniment. From the ‘Solo Marimbist Volume Two.’

Duration: 1:00
ROBISON, BRIAN

*Neo-/meta* (2001) - self-published by composer

Instrument: Violin and six-mallet marimba duet.


Duration: 15:00

RODGERS, BERNARD

*Mirage* (1958) - Southern Music Publishing

Instrument: Five-mallet marimba solo.

Comments: Only three chords require five notes played simultaneously in the entire piece, otherwise a four-mallet work. Written for Vida Chenoweth.

Duration: 5:00

ROSAURO, NEY

*Bem Vindo* (1988) - Published by Pro Percussão

Instrument: Five-mallet vibraphone solo, 3 mallets in the right hand, 2 in the left.

Comments: The first theme is developed through the majority of the work in variation form, accompanied by Rosauro’s signature rhythmical polytonal ostinatos. Two small motives are introduced towards the end of the work, the first in the Bachiana's style of Villa Lobos, and the second as a citation of a melody
from the Gauchos of South Brazil. This piece is dedicated to the composer's son Ricardo G. Rosauro.

Duration: 7:30

ROYAL, JEFF

Chase (1992) - not commercially available

Instrument: Four and six-mallet marimba solo.

Comments: Very difficult. Extremely fast with extensive independence and alternating hand movements; short six-mallet section. For Robert Paterson.

Duration: 5:00

SEJOURNE, EMANUEL

6 Baguettes (1994) - Editions Fuzeau, France

Instrument: Six-mallet marimba solo.

Comments: Lyrical block chord and single note lines. A good introductory piece to six-mallet literature.

Duration: 2:35

SIFLER, PAUL

Marimba Rondo (1977) - Fredonia Press

Instrument: Six-mallet marimba solo.
Comments: Tasteful use of six-mallets in various places throughout the work. A quasi fugue section and counterpoint with single note lines; dedicated to Linda Pimentel.

Duration: 3:40

STENGERT, GERHARD

*Choral fur Carmen* (1995) - Gretel Verlag

Instrument: Six-mallet marimba solo.

Comments: A chorale mostly in root position triads with some inversions. An excellent work for the developing six-mallet marimbist.

Duration: 3:05

STENSGAARD, KAI

*Gloria from Misa Criola* (1996) - MarimPercussion

Instrumentation: Six-mallet marimba solo with foot bells.

Comments: Ariel Ramires/arr. Kai Stensgaard. The rhythmical roots of the original work adapt well to the marimba. The bells and stylistic features add a Latin feel and flavour to the work.

Duration: 7:00

*Salta Mexicana* (2001) - MarimPercussion

Instrument: Six-mallet marimba solo.
Comments: Influenced by Mexican folklore music; this piece involves advanced independence and endurance from the performer.

Duration: 7:00

Two Mayan Dances (1985) - MarimPercussion

Comments: These two works are usually performed together but may be played independently. Strongly inspired by the folk music of Guatemala.

Lain Nebaj

Instrumentation: Six-mallet marimba solo with foot bells.

Comments: To be played with special mallets with built in maracas to enhance the rhythmical effect. A Latin waltz played in ‘first position’ that requires both expression and stamina.

Duration: 3:00

Manzanilla

Instrumentation: Six-mallet marimba solo with foot bells.

Comments: To be played with special mallets with built in maracas to enhance the rhythmical effect. A Latin waltz played in ‘first position’ (Gronemeier grip) that requires both expression and stamina.

Duration: 3:00
SUZUKI, HIIDEAKI

*Mokurei* (1985) - JFC

Instrument: Four, or six-mallet marimba solo.

Comments: A complex four-mallet work that can be performed as an optional six-mallet arrangement.

Duration: 10:30

TAKEMITSU, TORU

*Rain Tree* (1981) - Schott Japan Company

Instrumentation: Percussion trio Part 1 - Marimba (4 octaves) and 3 crotales.

    Part 2 - Marimba (4 octaves) and 3 crotales.

    Part 3 - Vibraphone and one octave set of crotales.

Comments: This work is often considered a vibraphone solo with marimba accompaniment. The vibraphone is the focus of the piece, a virtuosic work, applies five-mallets in some sections.

Duration: 12:00

TAUTENHAHN, GUNTHER

*Two October Songs* (1976) - Seesaw Music Corp.

Instrumentation: Four and six-mallet marimba and trumpet duet.

Comments: Second movement makes use of six-mallets to accompany the trumpet solo; each hand plays three note clusters in sixteenth note rhythms. Dedicated to Robert Levy and Gordon Stout.
VERSCHUEREN, FLOR


Instrument: Six-mallet marimba solo.

Comments: This solo is based on a Flemish folksong from the 16th century; a legendary fairy tale unfolds through the work. Commissioned by Ludwig Albert.

Duration: 4:00

VIDOW, JEFF

_Circumvented Time_ (1992) - not commercially available

Instrument: Six-mallet marimba solo.

Comments: Very difficult. Extensive use of one-handed rolls, difficult mallet independence, block chords. For Robert Paterson.

Duration: 5:00

WESTLAKE, NIGEL


Instrumentation: Five-mallet marimba solo with 3 tom-toms and digital delay.

Comments: An electronic delay system is employed throughout the work building a multi-marimba illusion and creating rhythmic counterpoint against the live performance. Commissioned by the ‘Synergy’ percussion group, Australia.
Duration: 5:35

YERMISH, HOWARD

Time & Space (1992) - currently not published

Instrument: Piano, tuned water glasses and six-mallet marimba.

Comments: Chorale style use of six-mallets. For Robert Paterson.

Duration: 5:00

To Play, To Dance (1990) - self-published by the composer

Instrument: Six-mallet marimba solo.

Comments: Moderately difficult. Involves foot stomping while playing; groove oriented, block chords. For Robert Paterson.

Duration: 5:00

YUYAMA, AKIRA

Divertimento for marimba and Alto Saxophone (1968) - Ongako

Instrumentation: Four and six-mallet marimba and saxophone duet.

Comments: Six-mallets are employed in the second section of the work with continuous rolls in a triad and first inversion form. There is time to pick up and put down the additional mallets during the piece. Commissioned by Keiko Abe.

Duration: 11:00
APPENDIX

A PEDAGOGICAL GUIDE TO COMPLETE INDEPENDENCE WITH THE GRONEMEIER TECHNIQUE INCLUDING DESCRIPTIONS, PHOTOGRAPHS AND MUSICAL EXAMPLES
When learning to perform with six-mallets there is a great element of trust involved. The performer must allow the mallets to move freely to establish a grip that will facilitate all hand positions and manipulations of the mallets. A focus on maintaining a relaxed grip, a good piston stroke and consistency of sound (both volume and tone) is essential. Applying this mindset to the exercises in this guide will assist making complete independence and the ‘Gronemeier’ technique very similar to learning the Stevens grip. Remember it is better to slip or drop a mallet occasionally while your muscle memory, co-ordination and strength develop, than to grasp the mallets too tightly. This only chokes the mallets and resultant sound, and could potentially become injurious. If when practicing, you feel any sharp pain, STOP! Shake your hands out and start again. If the pain continues, come back to it tomorrow; these things take time.

Brian Zator, director of percussion studies at Texas A&M University-Commerce, suggests for his beginning six-mallet students to consider starting out with lighter mallets so that the focus can be on technique and manipulation, rather than the weight of the additional mallets. By decreasing the weight of the mallets slightly, six mallets will weigh the equivalent to that of four mallets. This can greatly reduce the chance of injury caused by muscle stress and fatigue.
Above all, it is important to practice slowly at first exploring how the mallets feel as you allow them to move. In time they will situate themselves into the natural mold of your hands and begin to feel comfortable. A good starting point is to strike the bars in any order allowing the mallets to move freely from close to large intervals randomly. This will help you to realize the balance point, pivot point and the type of stroke required to produce a good sound.

Finding the pivot and balance points between mallets 4 and 5 (similarly with mallets 2 and 3) is essential in developing control with six mallets. To create the pivot point, hold two mallets in the regular Stevens grip,\(^1\) play eight piston strokes on a single bar with the inside mallet. Add the third mallet (mallet 4) underneath and crossing mallet 5, to create the Gronemeier grip. Repeat the eight piston strokes aiming to achieve the same result. The process of trial and learning\(^2\) when repeating this exercise many times will establish a good consistent pivot point.

In exercise 1., mallets 4 and 5 should lie at approximately 75 degrees to each other and parallel to the keyboard. To assist in locating the pivot point you may experiment by placing one finger on the crown of mallet 4 as you play the piston strokes. This will exaggerate the pivot feeling and visualize the mechanics involved as the mallets rotate.

**EXERCISE 1.**

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The purpose of exercise 2 is to develop control of mallets 1, 2, 5 and 6 in conjunction with each other. At the same time, the middle fingers carrying mallets 3 and 4 are being strengthened. As a result, the balance and pivot points are further established. Note accuracy is secondary when practicing this exercise. The most important element to performing with this grip is good technique, accuracy will improve as you progressively gain control of the mallets. Experiment with different permutations and intervals as your technique evolves.
EXERCISE 2.

Development of the Stevens grip with mallets 1, 2, 5 and 6.

Mallets 3 and 4 act as pivot points

A.

Mallet 1

Mallet 2

B.

Mallet 5

Mallet 6

C.
Fundamental coordination is the next step to acquiring complete independence with all six mallets. Exercises 3a, b and c are an excellent introduction to movement between mallets 2 and 3, and mallets 4 and 5. This is where the development of what I call ‘the movable Stevens grip’ begins.

There are two effective ways to use the thumb to manipulate these mallets successfully. The first is to leave the thumb on the middle mallet at all times. By rotating the wrist, coupled with rolling the thumb towards the innermost mallet, strokes can be performed between the two crossed mallets in each hand (2 and 3, and 4 and 5). Maintaining contact with the mallets at all times gives the performer a strong sense of manipulative control. The inexperienced performer can run into problems with this method because the feel of the piston stroke is very subtle and can easily be lost.

The second possibility is to apply the movable Stevens grip. In this method, one physically moves the thumb from mallet 4 to mallet 5 and vice versa; therefore effectively shifting the emphasis of the Stevens grip from one mallet to another. When playing slowly the piston stroke can be fully achieved using this technique.
Photo 36: Movable Stevens grip, mallets 5 & 6

Photo 37: Movable Stevens grip, mallets 4 & 6

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The following exercises, 3a, b and c focus on developing the ability to move freely among all six mallets. While practicing this exercise make a concerted effort to recognize which mallet is active and which is not. Strive for a consistent sound among all mallets at a moderately loud dynamic with the weakest mallet dictating the dynamic.

**EXERCISE 3a.**

![Musical notation for Exercise 3a.](image)

This exercise is designed to develop basic six mallet independence. Practice the assigned notes in triad form without variation until comfortable.
EXERCISE 3b.

Play each measure four times before preceding to the next.

Continue up the C Major scale to complete the octave with each permutation.

1. 

2. 

3. 

4. 

5. 

6.
EXERCISE 3c.

Move the whole permutation stepwise up the C Major scale one octave,
then come down the scale the same way.

Play four times before preceding to the next tonality

![Musical notation]

The preceding exercises are derived from the basic four mallet permutations that help develop manipulation of the mallets. Again, it is imperative to maintain the piston stroke and remain relaxed during the execution of these exercises as they bring together all of the concepts learned so far. Pay particular attention to achieving the same tone as you would when playing four mallets. Try not to accent mallets 1 and 6, as due to their isolated nature, and the natural trajectory, these mallets tend to be highlighted.

The one-handed roll is the final technique with which to become familiar before moving to some basic six-mallet literature. Actually playing music is where the techniques learned come to fruition and the integration between music and technique evolve and become one.

There are two variations of the one-handed roll, the alternating roll using a side to side motion similar to that of the one-handed roll with two mallets, and the ripple roll.
The alternating roll is commonly played in first position with mallets 2 and 3, or mallets 4 and 5 in close proximity to each other and acting as one mallet. This technique is developed in the same way as the two mallet one-handed roll, with the exception of the thumb, which straddles two mallets instead of one.

Photo 38: Thumb straddling mallets 4 & 5.

EXERCISE 4a.

Alternating Roll example for the right hand.

\[ \begin{array}{cccc} \text{4} & \text{6} & \text{4} & \text{6} \\ \text{5} & \text{5} & \text{etc...} \end{array} \]
The ripple roll requires a little more work to play smoothly, but is a very effective musical device. The natural direction for the hand to move is ‘outside to in’, therefore the ripple roll moves in that direction. The thumb must remain on the middle mallet to produce an even roll; the pivot for this roll should also come from the middle mallet. It is easy for the middle mallet to get lost dynamically in the ripple roll, so focusing or ‘leaning’ on the middle mallet will help to achieve consistency. Practicing this roll at various intervals and speeds will bring familiarity of the rhythmic motion needed to sustain the roll. Exercises 4a, b, c and d, demonstrate three spreads frequently used in performance with the ripple roll.

**EXERCISE 4b, c & d.**

Ripple Roll in three common positions.

**a.** Root position triads

```
6 5 4
```

**b.** First inversion triads

```
6 5 4
```

**c.** 1-5-8 chords

```
6 5 4
```
GRONEMEIER TECHNICAL POSITIONS

Exercises for developing the

Gronemeier six-mallet hand positions

First Position

1.

2.

3.

4.
Second Position

1.

2.

3.

4.
Expanded Second Position: 1-5-8

The 1-5-8 independent roll

RH Played in a fast 'outside to in' triplet pattern

LH Played in a fast 'outside to in' triplet pattern
Third Position
First Position Squeeze

Second Position Palm Lock
Third Position Lock
Manual Pull

\[ \text{RH} \]

\[ \text{LH} \]

Manual Push

\[ \text{RH} \]

\[ \text{LH} \]
First and Second Position Rolls

May be played as an alternating roll, or ripple roll.
Additional Development Exercises

Independent Stroke and Ripple Roll Development

1. RH Ripple roll
   \[ \begin{array}{c}
   \text{RH Ripple roll} \\
   1 \quad 2 \quad 3 \quad 2 \quad 3 \quad 2
   \end{array} \]
   LH Independent strokes
   \[ \begin{array}{c}
   \text{LH Independent strokes} \\
   1 \quad 2 \quad 3 \quad 2 \quad 3 \quad 2
   \end{array} \]

   Complete the octave then descend similarly...

2. RH Independent strokes
   \[ \begin{array}{c}
   \text{RH Independent strokes} \\
   4 \quad 5 \quad 6 \quad 5 \quad 6 \quad 5
   \end{array} \]
   LH Ripple roll
   \[ \begin{array}{c}
   \text{LH Ripple roll} \\
   4 \quad 5 \quad 6 \quad 5 \quad 6 \quad 5
   \end{array} \]

   Complete the octave then descend similarly...
1-5-8 Roll and Independent Strokes

Continue up the octave then descend similarly...
Exercises derived from Dean Gronemeier’s works to develop specific problem areas.

Excerpt from 2HT2HDL mvt. 3

1.

2.

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Excerpt from Coming Home

Arpeggio Development and Mallet 6 Independence
Notes

1 See Leigh Howard Stevens “Method of Movement” for an in-depth description of this technique.
3 Authors own photograph.
4 ibid.
5 ibid.
6 ibid.
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VITA

Graduate College
University of Nevada, Las Vegas

Timothy Andrew Jones

Homes Address:
12 Dellvale Court
Flagstaff Hill
South Australia 5059

Local Address:
693 Inglenook Drive
Las Vegas, Nevada 89123

Degrees:
Associate Diploma of Jazz Studies, 1994
Adelaide University, South Australia

Bachelor of Music (New), 1998
Adelaide University, South Australia

Master of Music, 2000
University of Nevada, Las Vegas


Examination Committee:
Chairperson, Dr. Dean Gronemeier, DMA, J.D.
Committee Member, Dr. Kenneth Hanlon, DMA.
Committee Member, Mr. Anthony LaBounty, MS
Committee Member, Mr. George Stelluto, MM, MM
Graduate Faculty Representative, Ms. Mary LaFrance, J.D.