

Rudimental Percussion in the Concert Hall

By Gene Fambrough

There have been times and places where a very clear separation existed between marching percussion (“outside” music) and serious concert percussion (“inside” music). However, the past 15–20 years have seen a gradual “blurring” of that line, so much so as to where rudimental passages and styles are becoming much more common in today’s literature. From the use of marching instruments in wind band (John Mackey’s use of a Kevlar snare drum in “Asphalt Cocktail”), to contemporary marching snare solos with digital audio, the inclusion of modern rudimental influence has found more prevalence in the recital hall.

BACKGROUND

My personal interest in this idea began as an undergraduate student who was obsessed with all things drumline. I wanted a way to showcase my skill set as a marching snare drummer alongside the traditional marimba, timpani, and drum set literature on my senior recital. Rather than simply go with a standard rudimental solo or a selection out of the Pratt book, I proposed something different to my then-teacher Tony McCutchen: could I write something myself and include it on my recital? With his blessing (and encouragement), I ended up with a piece titled “Three Cycles,” thus

starting my personal journey in bringing marching percussion into the concert hall.

In the nearly 30 years since, other composers and percussionists have shared their interests as well, adding many diverse ideas to this blended idea. Bob Becker’s workhorse rudimental feature “Mudra” combines his study of tabla drumming with contemporary rudimental techniques into a feature for soloist with percussion quartet; Paul Rennick gives some insight into his unique vocabulary in “Slopes”; Jim Casella and Murray Gusseck started their unique publishing company as a way to share significant marching percussion works (both solo and ensemble), but since have expanded to include many groundbreaking works in this new shared medium.

CATEGORIZATION

Recently, I conducted an informal survey to discover as many inclusions of marching/rudimental playing in pieces designed for the concert hall as possible. In doing this research it soon became clear that there were differing opinions of what constituted “rudimental.” More than just being the use of a marching instrument with marching sticks taped white, I had to consider the “amount” of rudimental passages or context presented. I decided on a (very) loose estimate of “majority rules,” where if more

than 50% of the snare drumming was rudimental in nature, it was included in these results. Thus, the sheer intricacy of a piece didn’t necessarily make it “rudimental”; it ultimately had much to do with whether the rolls were played open or closed. This meant that even if a piece was performed on a concert snare drum, it could be very rudimental in nature (e.g., “Walkin’ Down Coolidge” by Joe Tompkins).

Similarly, concert snare drum pieces with rudimental sections might not be included because of the amount of other techniques involved (fingers, brushes, etc.). One notable example is “4 Minute Psychosis” by Shaun Tilburg, a concert snare drum duet with audio track. I struggled with the categorization of this because a majority of the work contains non-traditional techniques (brushes, clapping, etc.), but there is a significant section of unison rudimental playing included.

With that being said, this is by no means an exhaustive list, and some may indeed disagree with some of the categorizations listed here. I believe the point is that marching percussion and rudimental playing have been firmly established as a legitimate means for artistic expression. I certainly welcome additional feedback to this list, and those who have questions, clarifications, or additions can contact me at gfambro@uab.edu.

SOLOS/DUETS

Composer	Title	Publisher	Notes
Baker, Jason	"Magnolia"	TapSpace	SD solo
	"From the Manor to the Heights"	TapSpace	SD/bass drum
Blume, Brian	"Strands of Time"	TapSpace	SD solo + audio
Engleman, Robin	"Clean it up...please"	HoneyRock	SD solo From Nexus Portfolio
Fairdosi, Scott	"Deleclusiastics"	TapSpace	SD solo
Fambrough, Gene	"Three Cycles"	TAP Publications	Accompanied Snare drum(s)
	"Digital Reflections"	Composer	Multi-tenors + audio
Friend, Korry	"Oculus"	C. Alan	SD solo + audio
Guidry, Aaron	"W.A.M."	Matrix	SD solo
Keown, Matthew	"Searching" (mvmnt 3)	Composer	SD solo
Marino, Robert	"Eight on 3 and Nine on 2"	TapSpace	Multi-percussion duet
Lawhorn, Lamon	"More Than Meets the Eye"	C. Alan	SD/kick drum
Ling, John	"Third Rail"	TapSpace	SD solo + audio
Lowes, Dustin	"Qubit States"	Composer	SD solo + audio
	"Quintronics"	Composer	Multi-tenors + audio
Moore, Joe W.	"iDrum"	Composer	SD solo
	"Quit..."	C. Alan	SD solo
Moore, Matt	"Quad Damage"	C. Alan	Multi-tenors + audio
Perez, Francisco	"Pulsar"	TapSpace	SD solo + audio
Queen, Jeff	"Double Flag"	TapSpace	SD solo
	"Modulation"	TapSpace	SD solo
Raymond, Danny	"Tricks of the Trade"	TapSpace	SD/drumset duet
Reilly, John Mark	"Drachten-elisabeth"	TapSpace	SD solo
	"The Iron Horse"	TapSpace	SD solo
Rivera, Luis	"Amalgamation"	TapSpace	SD/kick drum, hi-hat
Sieff, Jesse	"Chopstakovich"	TapSpace	SD solo + audio
Tompkins, Joe	"Six Duets in a Rudimental Style"	Bachovich	SD/BD duets
	"Walkin' Down Coolidge"	Bachovich	SD solo
Venet, Andrea	"Faded Lines"	TapSpace	SD duet w/ shared bass drum
Wharton, Russell	"Phylogenesis"	TapSpace	SD solo + audio

ENSEMBLE (including with feature performer)

Composer	Title	Publisher	Notes
Baird, Bradley	"Black Widow"	C. Alan	SD solo, marimba quartet
Baker, Jason	"Old Tyme Muster"	TapSpace	SD solo w/percussion quintet
Beck, John R.	"Downfall"	Honeyrock	4-5 percussion ensemble
Becker, Bob	"Away Without Leave"	KPP	Rudimental snares, percussion quartet
	"Lahara"	KPP	SD solo, unspecified accomp
	"New Thaan"	Honeyrock	SD solo, unspecified accomp
	"Mudra"	KPP	SD solo w/percussion quartet
Bobo, Kevin	"Quartet for Snare Drums"	Southern	SD quartet
Burritt, Michael	"spero"	KPP	SD solo w/percussion quartet
Casella, Jim	"Altered Gates"	TapSpace	Quintet using multi-tenors
Davila, Lalo	"Short Circuits"	Row-Loff	8 marching snares (with toms) + audio

ENSEMBLE CONTINUED (including with feature performer)

Composer	Title	Publisher	Notes
Davila, Julie	"Stool Pigeon"	Row-Loff	4/8 players on wooden bar stools
Eagle, Michael	"A Place for Everything"	Bachovich	Percussion Quartet
Fambrough, Gene	"Blindsided"	Composer	Percussion Ensemble w/battery
	"Shadowfax"	C. Alan	SD solo w/percussion quartet
Ford, Mark	"Infinity Energy 2"	Musicon	Large PE w/2 marching SD
Goto, Yo	"Ruffles Call from Afar"	C. Alan	SD w/wind band
Markovich, Mitch	"Four Horsemen"	Creative Music	Percussion Quartet
Morris, Joel	"The Uruk-Hai"	TAP Publications	Double bass drum set solo, with PE including marching snares
Rennick, Paul	"Slopes"	Innovative Percussion	SD solo w/percussion trio
Sanderl, Rob	"Schnabel"	TapSpace	SD solo w/percussion trio
Tilburg, Shawn	"The Infantryman"	Pocket Publications	SD trio
Townsend, Colton	"Concerto for Snare Drum and Percussion"	Composer	SD solo w/percussion quartet
Venet, Andrea	"Kibo"	TapSpace	SD solo w/percussion quartet
Willie, Eric	"Don't Look Left!"	Row-Loff	SD trio w/pedal BDs, toms

COLLECTIONS

Composer	Title	Publisher	Notes
Becker, Bob	Rudimental Arithmetic	KPP	
Bobo, Kevin	Six Snare Drum Challenges	Composer	Published on YouTube
Mativetsky, Shawn	Rudimentaal	Liquidrum	
Raymond, Danny	Let It Rip	TapSpace	Beginning to Advanced
Tompkins, Joe	Nine French-American Rudimental Solos	Bachovich	
Various	The Dynamic Snare	Pocket Percussion	10 solos w/audio

OPEN FOR INTERPRETATION

Composer	Title	Publisher	Notes
Bobo, Kevin	"Tantrum"	PercMaster	SD solo
Deane, Christopher	"The Titanic Days"	Musicon	SD solo w/ensemble
Ford, Mark/Rennick, Paul	"Renfro"	Musicon	Marimba/snare drum duet
Goto, Yo	"Aggression for Six Snare Drums"	C. Alan	Ensemble for six snare drummers
Reeves, David	"War Drum Peace Drum"	TapSpace	SD solo + audio
Tilburg, Shawn	"Four Minute Psychosis"	Pocket Percussion	SD duet + audio

[Click here to see a video of "Shadowfax" by Gene Fambrough, featuring rudimental snare drum](#)



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