

The Common Voice from Japan: A Performance Guide and Examination of the Three
Unaccompanied Marimba Pieces Performed by Keiko Abe on October 4th, 1968

by

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ABSTRACT

Torse III (1965) by Akira Miyoshi, *Two Movements for Marimba* (1965) by Toshimistu Tanaka, and *Time for Marimba* (1968) by Minoru Miki have remained “tour de force” pieces in the marimba repertoire since their inception nearly fifty years ago, yet they continue to present significant performance and interpretative issues to each new generation of marimbists. This document will serve as both a performance guide for advanced marimba performers, as well as provide insight into the aesthetic qualities that contribute to their lasting artistic significance.

Each piece will receive a designated chapter discussing the historical context, technical challenges, and general performance practices. The author will also present a designated chapter discussing the three over-arching aesthetic characteristics found in all three pieces: the use of the entire range of the instrument, the use of extreme contrasting dynamics and timbre, and the use of a common harmonic language.

Torse III, *Two Movements*, and *Time* were famously performed by Keiko Abe on her first classical marimba recital in 1968. This document will also help bring to light the enormous impact this recital had on the history of the marimba, as marimbists throughout the world today are forever indebted to Abe’s efforts.

To Laura Marie Wiedenfeld

Without your unconditional love and support, this project would have never
reached completion.

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PREFACE

Keiko Abe (b. 1937) was born in Tokyo to a family of doctors and businessmen. Her grandfather was one of the first people to bring grand pianos into Japan during the Meiji period (1868-1912).¹ As a child Abe studied piano, composition, xylophone and many percussion instruments. It should be noted that in 1947, the xylophone was designated as a musical instrument to be used in the elementary school music programs of Japan. At the age of 12, Abe attended a performance of the Lecours Mission group from the United States that included a performance on the first ever marimba brought to Japan.² From that point, Abe pursued the marimba as her instrument of choice. After graduating from music school, Abe formed a marimba group called the Xebec Trio. The group included two other young women and was quite commercially successful, performing popular music and light classics. Abe began to feel limited by the repertoire of the Xebec Trio and left to join the Tokyo Marimba Group, which was involved in commissioning “serious” contemporary compositions. This led to the first performance of Akira Miyoshi’s *Conversation for Marimba* in 1962. Abe’s career continued to blossom in the coming years, as she was the mallet specialist for the Japan Broadcasting Company NHK, performing on thirteen albums in five years.³

There is no question that Keiko Abe’s first classical marimba recital in Tokyo October 4th, 1968 was important for the advancement of the marimba as a serious

¹ Rebecca Kite, “Keiko Abe’s Quest; Developing the Five-Octave Marimba,” *Percussive Notes* (April 1998): 52.

² *Ibid.*

³ *Ibid.*

concert instrument. Abe performed six original works that evening; *Dialogue for Marimba and Three Instruments* (1968) by Takekuni Hirayoshi, *Divertimento for Marimba and Alto Saxophone* (1968) by Akira Yuyama, *Two Movements for Marimba* (1965) by Toshimitsu Tanaka, *Time for Marimba* (1968) by Minoru Miki, *Torse III* (1965) by Akira Miyoshi, and Teruyuki Noda's Quintet for Marimba, 3 flutes and contrabass entitled "Mattinata" (1968) or "Morning Song." The only unpublished work from this collection is Hirayoshi's *Dialogue*. Four of these pieces, the compositions by Yuyama, Tanaka, Miki, and Miyoshi, remain standards in the current marimba repertoire.⁴ Very few unaccompanied concert marimba pieces existed before Abe commissioned these works during the mid-1960s. Also important is the fact that these pieces were all written exclusively for four mallets, once the first movement of Tanaka's *Two Movements for Marimba* was rewritten for four mallets after its initial premiere in 1965. The only other such unaccompanied composition exclusively for four mallets was Alfred Fissinger's *Suite for Marimba* (1950). The majority of the existing repertoire was a derivative of existing xylophone techniques.⁵

Given that there were very few examples of serious marimba music utilizing four mallets, it is impressive that these pieces were so idiomatic at the time. It is well documented that Abe had a working relationships with these composers and even gave editing suggestions.⁶ Regardless of how idiomatic the pieces are, one cannot ignore the

⁴ Kite, Rebecca, *Keiko Abe: A Virtuoso Life* (Leesburg Virginia: GP Percussion, 2007), 57.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 49-61.

many other striking aesthetic characteristics that *Torse III*, *Time For Marimba*, and *Two Movements for Marimba* share with each other.

The following is how Abe's 1968 program would have appeared if it were written in English:

KEIKO ABE – AN EVENING OF MARIMBA:

In Search of Original Works for Marimba

October 4, 1968 - Lino Hall - Tokyo, Japan

Part One

Dialogue for Marimba and Three Instruments – Takekuni Hirayoshi

Divertimento for Marimba and Alto Saxophone – Akira Yuyama

Part Two

Two Movements for Marimba – Toshimitsu Tanaka

Time for Marimba – Minoru Miki

Torse III – Akira Miyoshi

Part Three

Quintetto Per Marimba, 3 Flauti, e Contrabasso, "Mattinata" – Teruyuki Noda

(This concert was the world premiere of every piece, except those by Tanaka and Miyoshi)⁷

All five critics attending Abe's recital gave her high praise. Music critic Yasushi Tagashi wrote of Abe's abilities in the weekly *Ongaku Shimbun*

⁶ Robert Bridge, "Performance Guide: Tanaka's 'Two Movements for Marimba'," *Percussive Notes* (April 2001): 44.

⁷ Rebecca Kite, 57.

“I was amazed by her great and superhuman achievement, that she could perform these complex pieces from memory, including a piece that did not get finished until two days before the concert. That Abe’s ceaseless effort has inspired and moved these serious composers to write new works, and that she exhibits such virtuosic skill on her instrument, marks a new epoch in the history of the marimba worldwide.”⁸

Abe’s recital won the 1968 Prize for Excellence in the Fine Arts Festival Competition. Hideo Tanabe, a member of the jury for the festival, suggested to Columbia Records that they make a recording of the concert repertoire. The company agreed, and *Keiko Abe: Art of Marimba* (Columbia, JX-9~11, 1969) was released in November of 1969 as a three record set. The album included everything from the 1968 recital as well as two new pieces that had been written for her; concerti by Akira Miyoshi and Minoru Miki, and an older piece; Miyoshi’s *Suite for Marimba: Conversation*. Ultimately, a single LP collection of these works was distributed in the United States in 1972 under the Vox label entitled *Contemporary Music From Japan: Vol. I: Music for Marimba, Keiko Abe, Marimba* (Candide/Vox, CE-31051, 1972).⁹ Included from the 1968 recital were Miyoshi’s *Torse III* and Noda’s *Mattinata*. It is through this recording that Abe’s music found an unlikely path to the university music schools of the United States. The album was found in a record store bargain bin for twenty-five cents and handed to the chair of

⁸ Rebecca Kite, 57-58.

⁹ Ibid.

the percussion department at the University of Illinois, Thomas Siwe.¹⁰ News of this recording eventually made it's way to the Oberlin Conservatory, the University of Michigan, Indiana University and the Eastman School of Music. Not long after, manuscript copies of *Torse III* and *Time for Marimba* were circulated, leading to over 30 performances of these pieces in the United States from 1973-1977.¹¹ Keiko Abe says that the three cornerstones of Japanese Marimba music include *Time for Marimba* (1968), *Torse III* (1965) and *Mirage* (1971) by Yasuo Sueyoshi.¹² Two of the three were on this monumental recital in 1968.

The 1968 recital was followed by two more monumental recitals in the coming years: "An Evening of Marimba II," November 3, 1969, which included the premier of Maki Ishii's *Marimba-Stuck*, and "An Evening of Marimba III," October 29, 1971, which included the important premier of Yasuo Sueyoshi's *Mirage*.¹³ In 1969, Abe met with Yamaha president, Genichi Kawakami, about a new marimba she had envisioned. This marimba would be richer and fuller in tone, with an extended range of five octaves. Abe's marimba would appear in its final form in 1984 (YM-6000) after 15 years of development.¹⁴ The range of five octaves is now standard for concert marimbas.

¹⁰ Ibid., 83-84.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Brian Edward Zator, *A Comparative Analysis of Minoru Miki's Time for Marimba and Concerto for Marimba and Orchestra*. (Denton, TX: University of North Texas, December, 2008), 2.

¹³ Rebecca Kite, 59-60.

¹⁴ Ibid., 94.

CHAPTER 1.1

Performance Guide for *Torse III*, Akira Miyoshi

Akira Miyoshi (1933-2013) is one of the most prominent composers to have ever written significant repertoire for the marimba. The majority of the pieces he created became standards of the serious marimba repertoire. Miyoshi composed several solo works, mixed chamber works which prominently feature the marimba, works for choir and marimba, and his concerto for marimba and string orchestra. Miyoshi received a degree in French literature, specializing in symbolist poetry and existentialism at the University of Tokyo. Miyoshi also studied composition with Raymond Gallois-Montbrun. In 1953 he took first prize in the Music Competition of Japan with his piece *Sonata for Clarinet, Bassoon and Piano*, which resulted in a grant to study composition at the Paris Conservatory with composer Henri Dutilleux. Miyoshi also won the NHK prize, the Italia Prize and the Palme Academique in 1984. He was named a person of cultural merit in 2001 by the Japanese government. Miyoshi is a former president of the Toho Gauken School of Music and served as the president of the Tokyo Metropolitan Festival Hall.¹⁵

Keiko Abe became familiar with Miyoshi's music through her work as an orchestral percussionist. "The music was so rich and strong to me," she recalled "and I really wanted him to write a marimba piece."¹⁶ Most percussionists came to know Akira Miyoshi by studying his pieces *Conversation for Marimba*, or *Torse III. Torse III*,

¹⁵ Greg Giannascoli, "A Celebration of the Music of Akira Miyoshi," *Percussive Notes*, (October 2005): 70.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 70.

composed in 1965, is the first major unaccompanied Japanese marimba piece to require the use of four mallets throughout the entirety of the work. Miyoshi had composed *Conversation for Marimba* in 1962, but it included movements which only required two or three mallets. *Torse III*, written in four movements (“These,” “Chant,” “Commentaire” and “Synthese”) involves several unprecedented technical challenges. Abe premiered *Torse III* on October 26th, 1965 at Yamaha Hall in Tokyo.¹⁷ A detailed performance guide for each of the movements is presented below.

1.2 Movement I, “These”

“These” has a melodic, almost recitative-like character, which leaves much for interpretation and individual expression. Nearly every motive of this movement is revisited in the later three movements. Although brief (only a minute and a half in length), “These“ contains many gestures requiring immediate interval changes and leaps across a wide range. An over-arching concept employed to navigate these large leaps is using the combination of mallets (1, 3) for rolls on the bottom third of the instrument, and mallets (2,4) for rolls on the top third of the instrument. This concept is discussed by marimba virtuoso Nancy Zeltsman in sections 1E and 1F of her book entitled *Four Mallet Marimba Playing, a Musical Approach for All Levels*.¹⁸ When applying this concept, the opening gesture in measure one and resolving in measure two, would employ the sticking (4, 2, 3) for the 32nd note triplets, and mallets (1, 3) for the roll.

¹⁷ Rebecca Kite, 43.

¹⁸ Zeltsman, Nancy, *Four Mallet Marimba Playing, a Musical Approach for All Levels* (Milwaukee Wisconsin: Hal Leonard Corporation, 2003), 12-13.

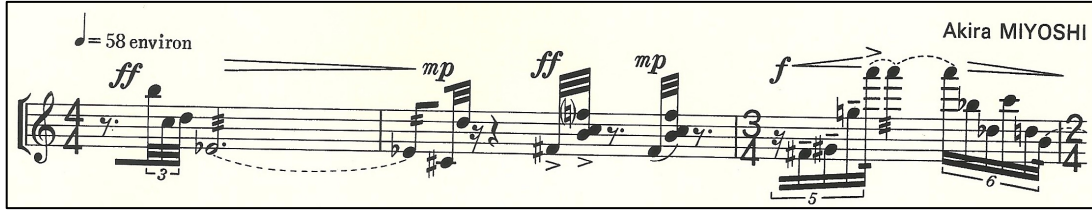


Figure 1.1: *Torse III* (“These”), mm. 1-3.

The ascending gesture in measure three would then conversely use mallets (2, 4) for the roll on A6. Given that measure three covers a three-octave range in the time span of one quarter note, using all four mallets is imperative, allowing the performer to keep his/her shoulders mostly square to the instrument.

Executing the tremolo in measure four is arguably one of the most difficult moments in the movement to execute smoothly.

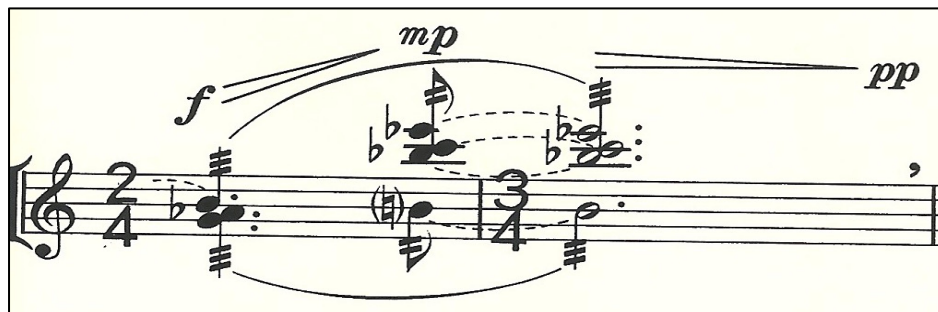


Figure 1.2: *Torse III* (“These”), mm. 4-5.

The author uses mallets (1, 3, 2) in ascending order to roll on the tri-chord found on the downbeat. Although not notated in the Ongaku published score, Abe employs the use of an all-white-key glissando to connect to the chord starting on the upbeat of two. The author finds that the glissando helps to decorate the ascending gesture, and keep the two chords, which are two octaves apart, more connected. The glissando is most

comfortably executed with mallet number three, allowing the left hand an instant longer to spread to the minor ninth encompassing the B4 and C6. The author finds it much more comfortable to perform the B-flat and E-flat with the right hand, given that both pitches are on the upper manual, avoiding an upper body shift or change in elbow positioning.

The movement contains three passages with which Miyoshi wants sustain executed by one hand. Although no one seemed to have coined the term “one-handed roll” at that time, it was clear what Miyoshi wanted to hear. It is also well documented that Abe had a working relationship with Miyoshi while the piece was being composed, where technique was discussed in great detail. The tremolo in measure eight may be considered the first one-handed roll in the marimba repertoire. Leigh Howard Stevens makes the argument that it is not.

“There is a spot (*Torse III*) in the first movement where a one-handed roll goes very nicely. That is a case where you think a one-handed roll might have been intended by the composer, but was never performed that way until very recently. The opening octaves of the Fissinger *Suite* is another example.”¹⁹

Although Miyoshi may not have been aware of the one-handed roll as a standard technique, it is still very clear that he wanted a sustained minor ninth in the right hand which could crescendo and decrescendo independently from the left hand marked with a tenuto marking. The measure is shown in figure 1.3 below.

¹⁹ Lauren Vogel, “An Interview with Leigh Howard Stevens,” *Percussive Notes* (February 1982) 67.

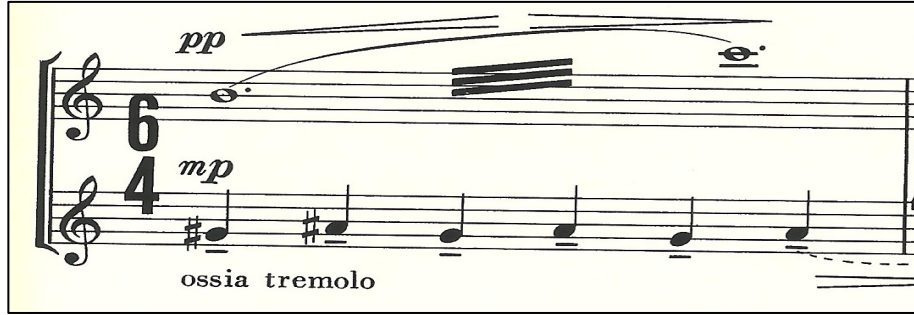


Figure 1.3: *Torse III* (“These”), m. 8.

The author performs measure eight with a one-handed roll in the right hand while independently striking the G#’s and A#’s. Miyoshi indicates that one could alternatively perform the left hand as a tremolo, and combine it as a standard roll with the right hand. One would just need to crescendo the right hand to achieve the written dynamics. The author finds that the one-handed roll provides much more clarity to the figure. The next one-handed roll passage occurs in measure fourteen.

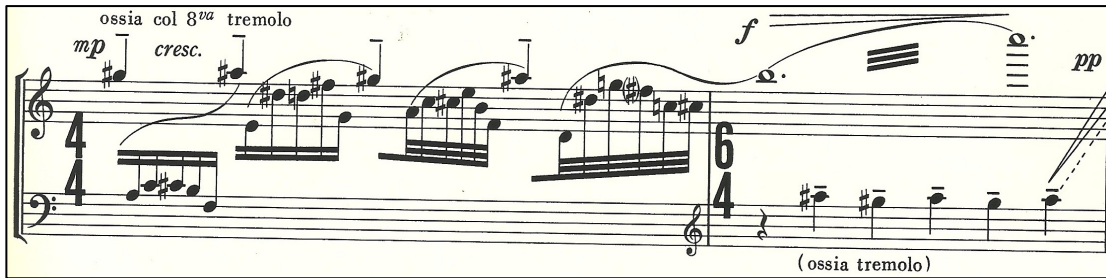


Figure 1.4: *Torse III* (“These”), mm. 14-15.

Miyoshi suggests that this figure be performed alternatively with a tremolo in the right hand with an added octave. One could infer that this would be the octave above the written pitch, as the left hand would overlap otherwise. The author performs the left hand with a (1, 2, 2, 2, 1), (1, 2, 2, 2, 1), (1, 2, 2, 2, 2, 1), (1, 2, 2, 2, 1, 1) sticking, navigating

the large leaps with mallets 1 and 2. In order to create an impactful arrival point at measure fifteen, the author chooses to transition from a one-handed roll to a standard roll on beat two. It should be mentioned that Abe chooses to perform this passage in a similar manner in her recording from 1969, found on the album “Solo Marimba Selections.”

Measure sixteen, pictured below, requires another technique seldom employed on the marimba; the double stroke. Due to the consecutive leaps, the sticking of (44, 33, 22, 44, 33) works well to set up the D# on beat two to be struck with mallet 1.

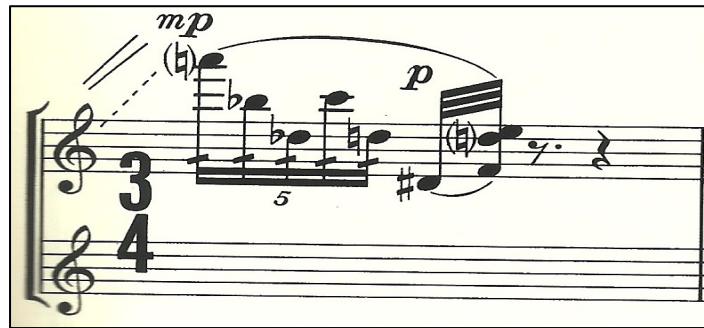


Figure 1.5: *Torse III* (“These”), m. 16.

The final passage of the movement to be discussed is found in measures 17, 18, and 19.

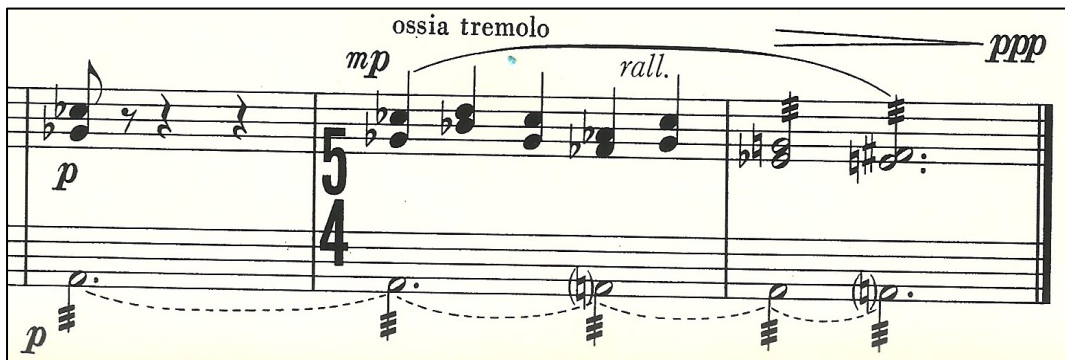


Figure 1.6: *Torse III* (“These”), mm. 17-19.

The author is aware of three different ways this passage is commonly performed. The most common interpretation is to roll all of the pitches together with a standard roll technique (double-verticals). Keiko Abe recorded the piece with this interpretation in 1969. One could also employ the use of a “mandolin” roll on the F4 with the left hand, and strike the remaining pitches with the right hand. The author chooses to move the left elbow outward and perform a one-handed roll on the F4. Moving mallet 2 to the edge of the bar closest to the player, and mallet 1 to the center of the bar will not only make the interval larger and easier to roll on, but also move the left hand out of the way of the right hand. The author transitions from a one-handed roll to a standard roll for the final two chords in measure 19. The third way to perform this would include striking the right hand double stop while simultaneously starting a standard roll with mallets (2, 3). One could then roll with mallets (2, 3, 4) once the right hand comes back in at measure eighteen.

1.3 Movement II, “Chant”

“Chant” (another brief movement only two minutes in length), provides a stark contrast to the opening movement, most evident in its four-voice chorale texture. Miyoshi indicates that the entire movement is to be performed as a tremolo. One could argue that “Chant” is still one of the most challenging chorale movements in the marimba repertoire. The juxtaposition of voicings in extreme closed-position and open-position, combined with a fast harmonic rhythm and relative tempo, continue to make this movement stand out. Rebecca Kite describes it as an “exploration of the interaction

between the timbre of the marimba and the musical textures of Miyoshi’s harmonic writing.”²⁰ The entire range of the marimba is used with the exception of one whole-step.

The author performs a glissando in the right hand between beats three and four of measure two, but does not choose to perform a glissando in measure five where there is a dotted-line connecting the B natural to the G.

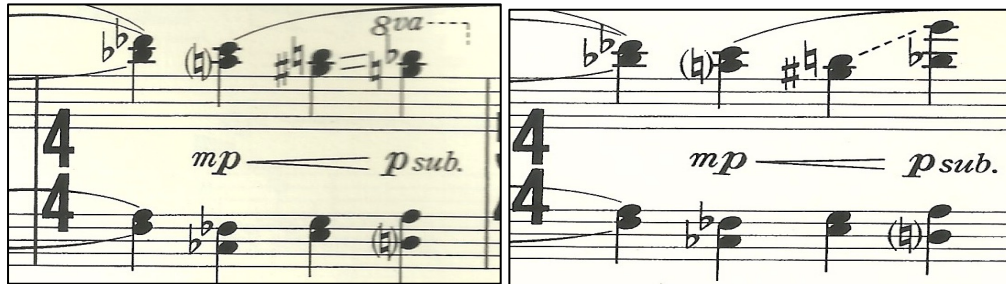


Figure 1.7: *Torse III* (“Chant”), m. 2. Figure 1.8: *Torse III* (“Chant”), m. 5.

The author again chooses to perform a glissando in the right hand between beats three and four of measure twelve. Another challenge of “Chant” involves mallet choice. One must find mallets that can cut in the highest octave of the marimba at a pianissimo dynamic, and still not be too hard in the C3-C4 range. The author’s solution is to use the Innovative Percussion model 504’s in the top three voices, with an IP503 in the bass voice. It is also effective to change the angle of the mallets in measure seven, and slowly work back to a standard mallet angle when approaching measure eleven. Otherwise, the mallets are too hard for the C3-C4 range.

²⁰ Rebecca Kite, 192-193.

1.4 Movement III, “Commentaire”

Miyoshi again creates contrast between movements, as “Commentaire” has a mostly single line texture, and is to be performed at a prestissimo tempo. “Commentaire” provides some of the most perplexing technical challenges found in the piece. Many of these issues stem from the existence of several consecutive leaps more than an octave apart. Another point of controversy, most apparent in this movement, is the existence of glissandi and rolls that occur in very tight spaces, given that the suggested tempo is half note equals 108.

Most contemporary marimba players would agree that the opening line from “Commentaire” is not idiomatic. One must be thoughtful with sticking choices in order to navigate the leaps, tri-chords, and doubles stops that pepper this melodic line. The author has found the below sticking to suffice.

3 2 4 3 2 4 2 1 4 2 3 4 2 3 2 4 2 4 4 4 3 2

3 3 3 2

1 2 2

Figure 1.9: *Torse III* (“Commentaire”), mm. 1-3.

Although the author typically will never meter rolls on the marimba, the quarter note rolls throughout this movement work very well as metered 16th notes. The author feels that the groove and forward momentum can be greatly compromised unless the rolls are metered, and the written tempo is too fast to perform anything other than 16th notes. The end result is that the pulse is clear, and the 16th notes are fast enough to create the illusion of sustain. Glissandi at times also need to be performed in an unorthodox fashion.

Under ideal circumstances, the author will always perform ascending glissandi by articulating with one hand, pressing with the other hand, and articulating the release with the hand opposite of the one pressing against the bars. This approach provides not only clarity of starting and ending pitch, but also rhythmic clarity. “Commentaire” requires the author to compromise this technique in order to keep the tempo appropriate. In measure ten, because of the consecutive leaps preceding the down beat, the author both articulates the D and presses up the white keys with the left hand (mallet 2), releasing with the right hand (mallet 3).

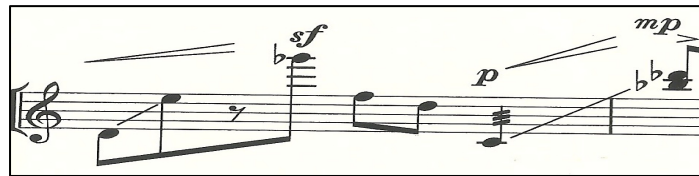


Figure 1.10: *Torse III* (“Commentaire”), m. 10.

The roll on C4, beat four creates another technical issue. The descending leaps from the G-flat, F, and D, prohibit the performer from rolling with two hands before the glissando to the downbeat of measure eleven. Instead of performing a roll and a glissando, the author instead begins a glissando on the upbeat of beat two, and fills the space of the quarter note with a glissando, connecting to the downbeat of measure eleven. The glissando is initiated with the left hand, and pressed with the left hand, similar to the solution to the beginning of measure ten.

Measure fourteen involves a completely different type of glissando technique.

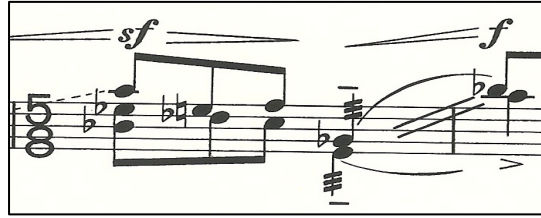


Figure 1.11: *Torse III* (“Commentaire”), m. 14.

The author strikes the E and G-flat as a double stop, and presses the glissando with mallet two up the white keys, releasing with another double stop on the B-flat and A natural on the downbeat of measure fifteen. The final glissando in measure twenty can be executed in the traditional sense. The author strikes the B with mallet two, presses with mallet three and initiates the roll with the left hand B and C#, buying time for the right hand to move while avoiding doubling.

Measure thirty-two is the trickiest of the roll and glissando combinations found in this movement.



Figure 1.12: *Torse III* (“Commentaire”), m. 32.

Because the roll is on a black key, the same solution used in measure ten will not work. The author performs a metered roll on the G# with mallets one and three and immediately performs a glissando from an A3 to an A5. The sticking for the roll is (1, 3, 1, 3) played as sixteenth notes. The glissando can then be initiated with mallet one, pressed with mallet three and released on the A4 with mallet two. A single-alternating

stroke is then utilized to perform the A4 moving to the B3 in eighth notes. The passage moves vigorously, but sets up measure thirty-three quite well.

Measure forty-five is another metered roll in 16th notes, performed with the sticking (3, 2, 3, 2) leading into the sticking of (4, 2) for the two eighth notes on beat four.

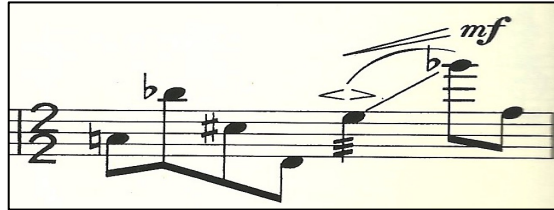


Figure 1.13: *Torse III* (“Commentaire”), m. 45.

The author chooses to not perform a glissando between the C# and E in measure forty-seven because it lands on a black key and does not allow enough time to involve both hands. It should be noted that Abe decided not to perform this glissando in her 1969 recording. The final glissando is executed in the same manner as the glissando in measure twenty, and the author refrains from metering the roll preceding it as 16th notes, but instead adds a slight ritard and fills the space as appropriate with an indeterminate length roll/sustain.

1.5 Movement IV. “Synthese”

“Synthese” accounts for more than half of the length of this work, and combines many of the elements of the previous three movements. Glissandi are utilized as a way to connect rolls across large leaps when slurs are indicated. The first example of this can be found in measure five.

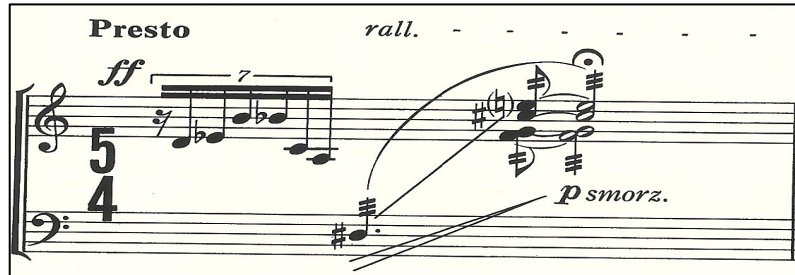


Figure 1.14: *Torse III* (“Synthese”), m. 5.

The D# roll is followed by a tetra-chord more than an octave higher, while a decrescendo is also indicated. The author finds that the use of the glissando helps immensely to achieve the intended gesture. The next glissando performed by the author occurs in measure ten, connecting the start of beat two to the upbeat of beat two.



Figure 1.15: *Torse III* (“Synthese”), m. 10.

The right hand glides across the white keys from the D-flat and E-flat to the C# and E. Much like the previous gesture in measure five, this helps to connect rolls moving

across a large leap. It should be known that Abe performs this excerpt in a similar manner in her 1969 recording.

The presto interjections which occur in measures five, eleven and sixteen, can be accurately performed by holding a large interval (locking large interval as in the Stevens technique) when setting up ones hands over the first three notes with the sticking 3, 2, 4. One can then perform the gesture without needing to reset a new arm or hand position.

Measure twenty presents the most extreme interval work of the entire piece.

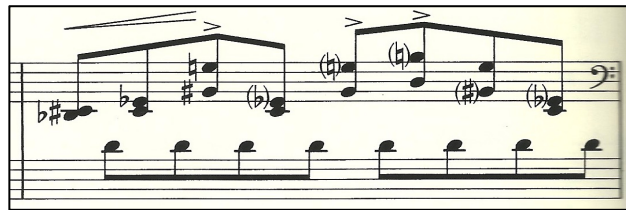


Figure 1.16: *Torse III* (“Synthese”), m. 20.

While the right hand stays on the D4, the left hand must shift between an augmented second, diminished third, and minor sixth within the space of two beats at a prestissimo tempo. The author works on this passage by practicing the right hand in isolation; first playing each of the right hand intervals four times in succession, and working systematically by removing the number of times each right hand chord is performed until they are played accurately. Not until that point will the author move the intervals at the written eighth note speed. Measure twenty-seven is another moment in the prestissimo section meriting discussion.

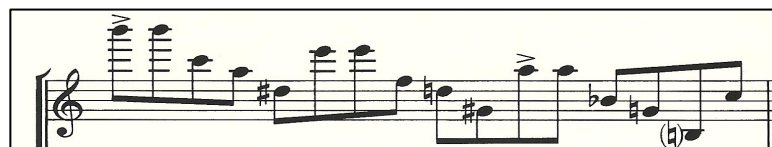


Figure 1.17: *Torse III* (“Synthese”), m. 27.

Miyoshi transposed the tetra-chord A, B, C, D# down a fifth twice to create a descending sequence. The way in which the tetra-chord is voiced creates a technical issue, as the four pitches are written over the space of nearly three octaves in descending order (major seventh, minor third, and diminished fifth). Adding another challenge is the fact that the first pitch of each transposition is doubled, forcing a double sticking (4, 4, 3, 2, 1). The author practices this measure by blocking-out the tetra-chords as double-vertical strokes, making sure that all four pitches can be struck without changing arm or wrist position. The author will then switch to the written sticking, while also paying attention to the accents occurring on beats one and six.

The final measure of the prestissimo section, shown in figure 18, provides a serious sticking problem.

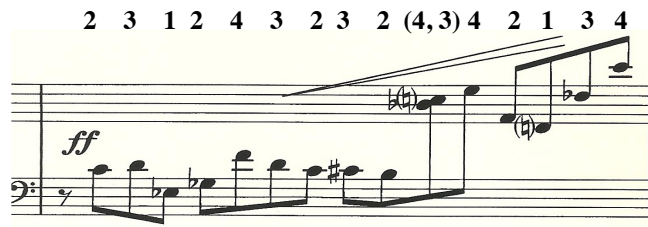


Figure 1.18: *Torse III* (“Synthese”), m. 32.

The author has found that performing lateral strokes in the same hand whenever possible helps to set-up the larger leaps. Beginning on the upbeat of beat seven in measure thirty-two, Miyoshi wrote the consecutive ascending leaps of a major seventh, major seventh and major third, followed by a descending major seventh. The above

sticking is a sufficient solution, but must still be practiced slow using a swift piston stroke to ensure that the leaps are learned accurately.

Measure thirty-four is another moment employing a two handed glissando on the white keys. The author also decided to perform the sixteenth notes on beat three with both hands holding the interval of a minor second (3, 4) then (1, 2) for two reasons; ones hands are already holding small intervals to perform the closed position release on the upbeat of two, and the notes are written with accents at a FFF dynamic. The *piu lento* in measures forty-one and forty-two are best executed with right hand glissandi only. This is due to the fact that the left hand plays exclusively on the black keys, while the right hand is exclusively on the white keys, setting up the white key glissandi quite well. In measure forty-three, the author performs the glissando with mallet three only, beginning on the B-natural and moving up two octaves to the next B-natural.

The final gesture culminating in the final roll over the bar line to measure forty-five, is best connected with glissandi moving in contrary motion across the white keys of the instrument.

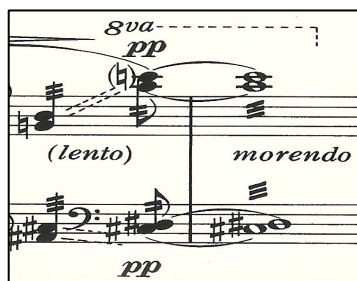


Figure 1.19: *Torse III* (“Synthese”), mm. 44-45.

It should be noted that this chord is voiced across the entire range of the four-octave Musser instrument that Abe used in 1965²¹, with the exception of one half-step from the C#3 to the C3. The author also is careful to strike the high C7 on the edge of the bar closest to the performer in order to more comfortably play the left hand in the center of the C# and D#.

Overall, *Torse III* gives the performer a considerable amount of freedom for interpretation, which may be one of the main reasons why this piece has such an endearing legacy.

²¹ Rebecca Kite, "Keiko Abe's Quest: Developing the Five-Octave Marimba," *Percussive Notes*, (April 1998): 52.

CHAPTER 2.1

Performance Guide for *Two Movements for Marimba*, Toshimitsu Tanaka

Toshimitsu Tanaka (1930) is one of the most prolific composers in Japan, and has written over eighty compositions for a variety of media. Tanaka was born in Aomori in Northern Japan in 1930. He graduated from the Kunitachi College of Music (Tokyo) in 1956 with a composition degree, and earned a graduate degree from the same school in 1957. Tanaka was appointed lecturer at the Kunitachi College of Music in 1968, Associate Professor in 1974, and Professor of Composition in 1980.²²

Tanaka composed *Two Movements for Marimba* for marimbist Yoshihisa Mizuno in 1965. Movement one was originally written for two mallets, and was not premiered at the time because Mizuno deemed it to be too difficult. Abe, who attended the premiere, asked Tanaka if she could perform the work. Abe invited Tanaka to her home while she was preparing the work, and suggested that he re-write the first movement for four mallets and he agree to do so.²³ Tanaka said that he wrote *Two Movements for Marimba* as a “puzzle piece” put together with many small pieces or fragments. The two movements of the work are meant to be contrasting.²⁴ The majority of the first movement is dominated by a single-line texture, outlined by occasional double stops, while the second movement alternates between a four-voice chorale style and a piano-style left hand accompaniment/right hand melody. In this chapter, I will be presenting a detailed performance guide of both movements.

²² Robert Bridge, 45.

²³ Ibid., 44.

²⁴ Ibid.

2.2 *Two Movements for Marimba*, “Movement I”

The tempo marked on the score is quarter note = 132, however Abe recommends quarter note = 156.²⁵ Tanaka said that he prefers Abe’s tempo.²⁶ The author uses Innovative Percussion IP-504’s for mallets (2, 3, 4) while an IP503 works well in the bass voice. It is imperative to begin the piece holding octaves in both hands (large interval grip as explained by Leigh Howard Stevens in *Method of Movement*)²⁷, and continue to lock the octaves until measure six in the right hand, and measure eight in the left hand respectively. Being familiar with the subtlety of large interval manipulation is a major skill needed to accurately perform this piece. Measure eight contains errata; there should be an octave D-natural in the left hand, adding a D4 to the downbeat. Measure twelve should contain “*sf*” markings on the bottom staff identical to measure twenty-five. The rolls in measure thirteen can convincingly be performed as single stroke fours both starting on the right hand. The first seventeen measures are identical to measures eighteen through thirty-four with the exception of one pitch, the fifth pitch (E-flat) of measure 15 and the fifth pitch of measure thirty-two, (E-natural). At first glance one might think that this is a mere typo, but Tanaka has confirmed that it is not the case. The measures should be performed as written.²⁸ Measure thirty should be rolled identically to measure thirteen.

²⁵ Robert Bridge, 44.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Leigh Howard Stevens, *Method of Movement for Marimba*, (Asbury Park New Jersey: Keyboard Percussion Publications, 2000), 12-15.

²⁸ Virginia Weibel, “Wrong Notes are Deadly,” *Percussive Notes* (June 1999): 44.

The section beginning in measure thirty-five, continuing until measure forty-nine, contains a consistent melody/accompaniment texture. The ostinato, which often changes hands, should not over-power the moving line. Measures fifty through fifty-two are difficult for two reasons; the three-octave texture contains large leaps, and Tanaka prefers the pitches to be sustained as rolls.²⁹

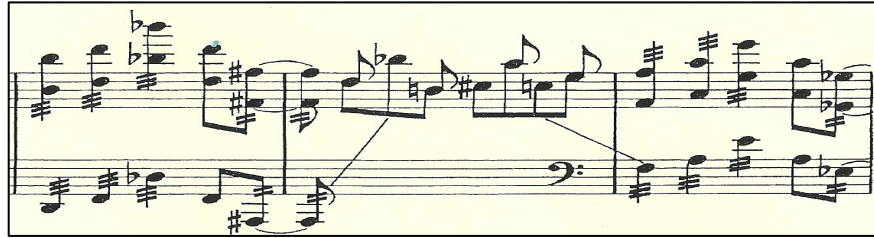
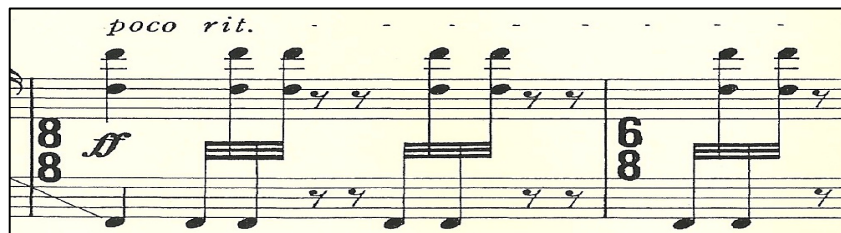


Figure 2.1: *Two Movements for Marimba* (“I”), mm. 51-53.

The author again finds that single stroke fours suffice in filling the space at the quarter note = 156 tempo. It is suggested that this excerpt be broken down and practiced without the rolls, and played as triple-stops until accuracy is ensured. The sticking in the left hand of (1, 1, 2, 2, 1) works well for both measures fifty and fifty-two, helping to navigate the large leaps.

Tanaka suggests that measure sixty-five and sixty-six be performed in a very specific fashion.



²⁹ Robert Bridge, 44.

Figure 2.2: *Two Movements for Marimba* (“I”), mm. 65-66.

The *poco ritard* should only apply to the space between each of the rhythmic cells, as the thirty-second notes need to retain the written tempo.³⁰ Measures seventy and seventy-one require anticipation and planning ahead in order to execute the octaves accurately. The author chooses to already have an octave interval set in the right hand beginning in measure sixty-seven, while the left hand needs to move to an octave while repeating the E4’s in measure seventy as to be ready for the octave C#’s and D#’s in measure seventy-one. Measures eighty-eight and eighty-nine require rapid navigation from the upper to lower manuals of the instrument.



Figure 2.3: *Two Movements for Marimba* (“I”), mm. 88-89.

It is common to perform this passage with mallets two and three, but the author has found success in using a combination of all four mallets to prepare for several of the leaps. The right hand could be performed as (3, 3, 4, 4, 3, 4, 4, 4, 4, 3, 3, 4) and conversely as (1, 1, 2, 2, 1, 2, 2, 2, 2, 1, 1, 2) in the left hand. The author applies the same sticking to the altered texture in measures ninety-four and ninety-five. According to Tanaka, measures ninety-seven through ninety-nine should *ritard*, while the fermata

³⁰ Robert Bridge, 44.

should be held for a very long time.³¹ The performer needs to then attack measure one-hundred with the same energy and tempo as found in the beginning of the piece. The final octaves of the movement need to be performed accurately.

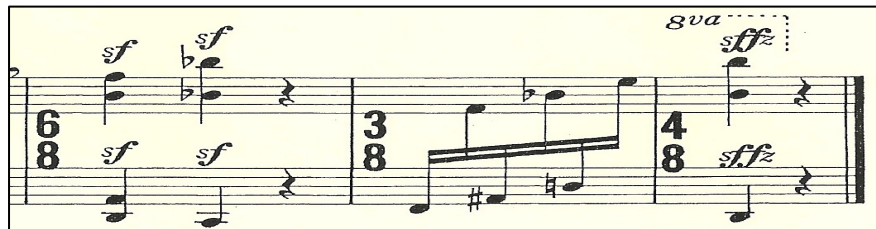


Figure 2.4: *Two Movements for Marimba* (“I”), mm. 97-99.

The author has found that this can be achieved consistently with the following approach; after striking the octave B-flats on beat two of measure one-hundred, one should remain locking the octave in the right hand while playing the sixteenth notes in measure one-hundred and one. The sticking of (2, 3, 2, 3, 2, 3) works well for measure one hundred and one. One should practice the last two pitches in each hand separately (right hand moving from a E5 to the octave B5 and B6, and the left hand moving from a B4 to a B3). Once the hands are able to consistently strike the correct pitches, measure one hundred and one should then be added. The contrary motion in measure one hundred should also be practiced hands separately. Once all three measures are consistent, they can be added together and practiced as a unit. While many performers add notes (often times octaves), Tanaka prefers that the piece be played as written with only the above exceptions I have noted.³²

³¹ Robert Bridge, 44.

³² Ibid.

2.3 *Two Movements for Marimba*, “Movement II”

The second movement of Tanaka’s *Two Movements for Marimba* is a virtuosic showpiece for the concert marimba, even after fifty years of technical advances and repertoire development. “Movement II” was the first round compulsory piece for the 2007 Belgium Universal Marimba Competition and was even chosen as part of the Houston Symphony’s sub-list audition in 2015. Mallet choice is crucial, as this piece uses the full range of the four-octave instrument, including soft rolls in the lower and upper registers. Tanaka recommends the use of a two-tone mallet.³³ Abe uses the Yamaha YM6040 mallets. The author has gone back and forth with the use of two-tone mallets, simply because of the fact that there are so many soft rolls in the upper register. The YM6040 mallets sound beautiful in the low octave, but the performer must sacrifice volume for tone when rolling softly in the high register, otherwise the pitches do not speak at all. The IP504’s in mallets (2, 3, 4) with an IP503 in the bass again will work for this movement. The “trade off” is that the performer must manipulate different mallet angles and use proper touch on the low end of the instrument to create contrasting colors.

Tanaka thinks of the opening fourteen measures of the piece as “mist.”³⁴ In the case of the first five measures, they should be performed as softly as possible while even discounting the phrase markings, whereas the recapitulation starting in measure fifteen should be performed as marked. There are limited errata in comparison to the first movement; the E4 quarter notes in both measures four and fifteen should be dotted

³³ Ibid., 44.

³⁴ Ibid.

quarter notes, meaning that the eighth-rest in measure fifteen should be disregarded.³⁵ In preparing the opening chorale sections, it is important to note that the melody is not always in the soprano voice. The performer must be aware of shifting focus to the left hand when that is not the case.

Measure forty-one has an unusual performance note from the composer; the performer is supposed to play the glissando with a combination of the mallet heads and shafts hitting the bars simultaneously.

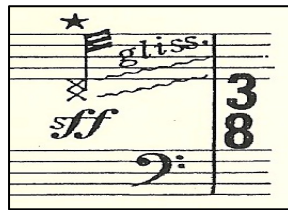


Figure 2.5: *Two Movements for Marimba* (“II”), m. 41.

This can be quite effective, but requires a bit of practice. The author starts the glissando by striking the D4 and F4 as a double-stop in the left hand, while simultaneously starting the glissando in the right hand. This method ensures that there is a solid articulation beginning the gesture. One must be careful to not have too steep of an angle in the right hand, as the shafts have a tendency to get stuck between the bars. The author, when using birch shafts, intends for a ratio of 70/30 mallet-head to shaft, but more 50/50 when using rattan shafts.

Measure fifty-five is not a glissando, but meant to be performed as the written thirty-second notes. The author prefers to start the measure right-hand lead. The nature of

³⁵ Ibid., 44.

the measure is certainly gestural, but the starting and ending pitches need to be accurate. Measure sixty-five to seventy-one is transitional material and may be performed with some rubato.³⁶ It must be noted that the tempo does not change at measure seventy-five, so one must be sure not to rush this transition. The material from measure seventy-six to the Tempo I is actually slower than the *piu mosso* beginning in measure forty-two.

The original intention of the composer in measure 114 is for the performer to actually strike the pitches in the upper stave with both mallets in the right hand.³⁷ With some experimentation, the author found that this is actually a hindrance in achieving the marked *FFF* dynamic, and that it is easier to just strike the bars with mallet 3.



Figure 2.6: *Two Movements for Marimba* (“II”), m. 114.

³⁶ Ibid., 44.

³⁷ Ibid.

CHAPTER 3.1

Performance Guide for *Time for Marimba*, Minor Miki

Minoru Miki (1930-2012) was born on March 16th in the Akui-cho district of Tokushima City, Japan. Miki performed in his high school choir and attended the Tokyo National University of Fine Arts and Music. He studied with Tomojiro Ikenouchi and Akira Ifukbe and finished his composition degree in 1955. Much like Miyoshi and Tanaka, Miki composed for many different genres and instrument combinations, and has over 200 works to his credit. His most notable works for percussion other than *Time for Marimba* include *Concerto for Marimba and Orchestra*, *Marimba Spiritual* and *Z Concerto*.³⁸ In this chapter, I will be presenting a detailed performance guide for the entire piece.

When Abe asked Minoru Miki to compose an original piece for her 1968 recital, Miki explained that he very much wanted to, but at the moment had no musical ideas for a marimba piece.³⁹ Miki happened to visit southern Japan and Indonesia in the summer of 1968 and was instantly inspired by Gamelan music.⁴⁰ Miki immediately telephoned Abe from Bali to inform her that he had just received the inspiration needed to compose what would become *Time for Marimba*. In about ten days, while using the atmosphere of the Gamelan sound, Miki was able to finish the piece.⁴¹

³⁸ Brian Edward Zator, 6-9.

³⁹ Rebecca Kite, 52.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Ibid.

Chapter 3.2

The first item to consider when preparing the piece is the indication at the top of the first page where Miki wrote “soft sticks” (hard at FF). In collaboration with her friend Hidehiko Sato, Abe was able to create the perfect mallet for the piece, which later became known as a “two-tone” mallet, capable of multiple colors, and able to achieve the contrast Miki was hoping for.⁴² The mallet constructed by Sato, had a hard core, covered with a layer of foam rubber which was wrapped with a secondary layer of yarn. If Abe used a low velocity stroke, the mallet would produce the character of the soft yarn, when played with high velocity, the weight of the core would cut through the soft yarn and create a bright character. These two colors contribute to the unique aesthetic of *Time for Marimba*. It is interesting to note that Toshimitsu Tanaka retroactively prefers the use of Abe’s “two-tone” mallets on *Two Movements for Marimba*, while his composition actually predated Miki’s by three years. Currently there are many large stick and mallet manufacturers who sell mallets claiming to produce multiple tones. The author finds that the Yamaha YM6040 is still the best choice for this piece.

Three major published analyses exist for this piece, written by Greg Murray, Paul Campiglia and Brian Zator respectively. The author suggests that all three, in addition to this performance guide, should be used to prepare the piece. It is known that Miki did not use serialist techniques to compose this music,⁴³ although one might make that assumption. Instead, Miki used a very free approach he described as improvisatory.⁴⁴

⁴² Rebecca Kite, 52.

⁴³ Brian Zator, 4.

Although the character of the piece may be intended as improvisatory, there is no doubt that what Miki asks of the performer is highly ordered. The first sixteen bars comprise the A section. The first six bars exclusively use sixteenth note quintuplets and sixteenth note triplets for rhythmic material. It is imperative that the performer learns this material with a metronome and faithfully executes the modulations to and from the triplets. The author suggests learning the first seven beats of the piece while accenting each group of quintuplets, as it is crucial to be able to hear the hexachord starting on each permutation of the five pitches. After this is mastered in practice, the accents should be removed.

Measure five provides the first technical problem of the piece, as the performer is required to navigate the space from C3 to A-flat 6 in one beat.

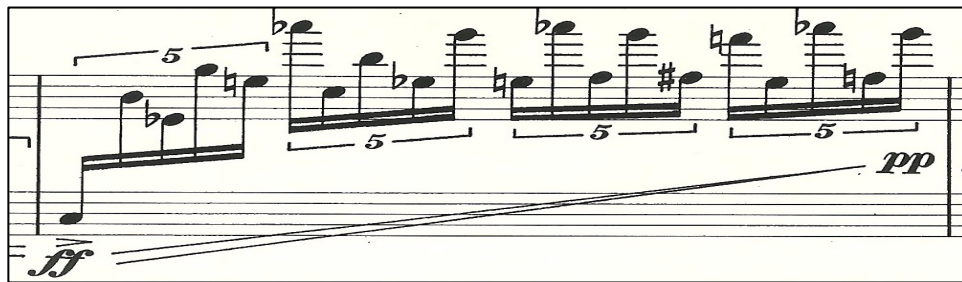


Figure 3.1: *Time for Marimba*, m. 5.

The author suggests practicing this excerpt by breaking the six pitches up into three groups of two and striking them slowly as double stops, emphasizing a strict piston-stroke. The double stops should outline the sticking utilized by the author in the excerpt C3 and B4 (1, 3), E-flat 4 and G5 (2, 3), and E5 and A-flat 6 (2, 4).

⁴⁴ Ibid., 4.

The final glissando in measure six is unusual given that it must occur simultaneously while the three sixteenth notes are performed.

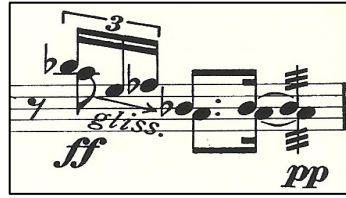


Figure 3.2: *Time for Marimba*, m. 6.

The author is unaware of any such passage in the marimba repertoire similar to this predating *Time for Marimba*. The author's solution is to strike the double-stop with mallets (2, 4) and play the remaining triplets in the right hand as alternating strokes (3, 4) while continuing to play a glissando with the left hand. Moving one's right elbow outward will allow for the player to strike the A-flat near the center of the bar, opening up the interval and making it easier to execute the FF dynamic. The glissando releases with a double stop with mallets (2, 3) on the C and D-flat.

It is important to be aware of the note lengths in measure ten. One must take into account not only accurate attack points, which are equal to measure nine, but also different roll lengths which must outline the difference between the eighth note quintuplets and quarter note quintuplets. The author plays single stroke threes for the eighths notes, and single stroke fours for the quarter notes, all starting with the right hand. The same concept is then applied to measure fourteen. The author also prefers to strike the tetra-chords on the down beats of measures fifteen and sixteen beginning with all four pitches being heard simultaneously.

The B-flats and B naturals found in the first beat of both measure twenty-three and twenty-five are two octaves apart and occur in rapid succession. A solution to accuracy issues is to pre-position the mallets over the B-flats and B naturals at the same time. In order to do so, one must open to a large interval with the mallets in the center of the bars, with ones upper body facing at a forty-five degree angle toward the low end of the instrument. After striking the first two pitches, the author then faces forward and performs the following triplets with mallets (2, 3).

The B section, which begins in measure twenty-nine, is the most technical passage of the piece. Miki's theme, which is fifty-three notes in length (linked to the opening tempo of 53 bpm), is effectively expanded from a half-step melodic direction, to whole-steps, minor thirds and finally major thirds. The melodic direction of these intervals corresponds to a chromatic scale, whole-tone scale, diminished triads and augmented triads moving across the full range of the instrument. Furthermore, the rhythm requires the performer to play double strokes with mallet (1) throughout. The author suggests practicing this section first with the double strokes removed, isolating each transposition, repeating until all of the correct pitches are struck consistently. Next, one should isolate the double strokes by creating a simple double-stroke exercise. The author moves up the white keys playing a basic sixteenth note diddle exercise with mallets (1, 3). The touch needed to execute the double strokes consistently can be considerably difficult depending on the mallet choice. One must also take into consideration that the double strokes are not accented. After success is consistently achieved working on these skills individually, one can work on the entire excerpt as written.

The pointillistic nature of measure thirty-five makes this measure quite intimidating when first learning the pitches. The passage might sound like a flurry of unrelated pitches to some, however, it consists exclusively of the B theme with notes octavely displaced.

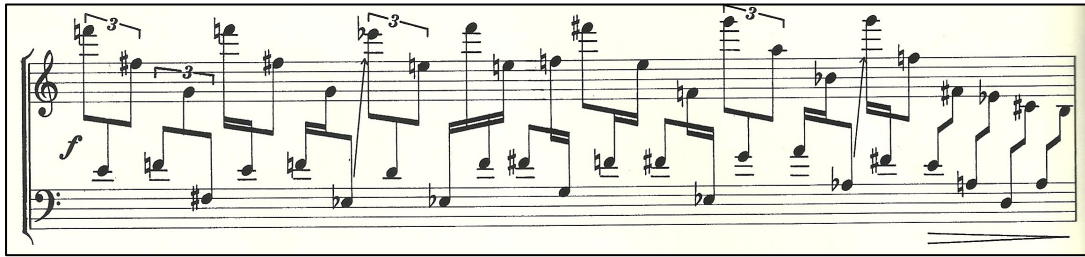


Figure 3.3: *Time for Marimba*, m. 35.

The author finds that locking the large interval grip in both hands makes this excerpt considerably more accurate. Slight elbow movements are required to accommodate for the shifts from the upper to lower manuals, but they are mostly subtle. The author has found success in practicing the excerpt divided into four small sections. The first section is four beats in length and ends after the first glissando. One can immediately notice that the only difference between the first two beats and the second two beats is a variation in rhythm, while the hexachords are identical with the exception of the E-flat. The glissando from the E-flat 2 to the E-flat 6 is physically impossible to execute exactly as written. The author's solution is to strike the E-flat 2 with mallet (4) and play the glissando with mallet (3), releasing with mallet (4) on the E-flat 6. It is advised that the performer try to glissando across as many pitches as possible in the allotted time. For the author, that approximately ends up being from a G4 to an E5, which is sufficient to create the desired gesture. The second section, to be practiced in isolation,

consists of beats five and six. The third section consists of beats seven, eight and nine and the final section consists of beats ten, eleven and twelve respectively. The connecting material (final descending four beats) can be practiced at a different time, and is not nearly as challenging. Section two, requires the fastest and most drastic shifting. The glissando from the A-flat 3 to the G6 can be executed in a similar manner to the previous one. Overall, it is important to learn measure thirty-five slowly and accurately. Speeding the excerpt up to the written tempo prematurely will ultimately require more work in the future. This is a passage that the author breaks down in nearly every practice session when preparing a performance of the piece.

Measure fifty-one again requires a different technique to effectively execute the intended glissando gesture. The issue with this excerpt is that there is not enough distance from the E3 to the A-flat 3 to generate the friction needed for the glissando to be effective.

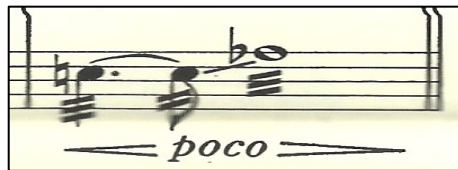


Figure 3.4: *Time for Marimba*, m. 51.

The author's solution is to play a chromatic scale from the E3 to the A-flat with the same speed and touch as the roll that precedes and follows the glissando. This approach also makes it possible to control the poco crescendo during the glissando.

The final technical issue to be discussed occurs at the beginning of the final stave. The hexachord (F#, F, A, C#, B-flat, D) is scored across three octaves, requiring rapid elbow movements.

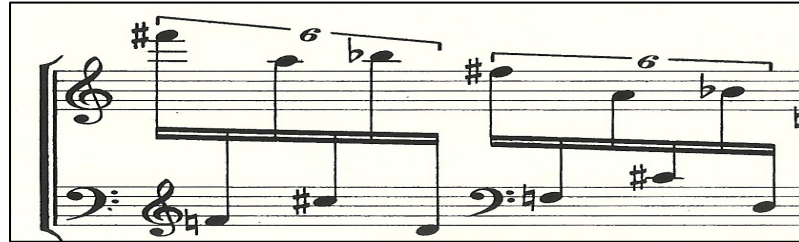


Figure 3.5: *Time for Marimba*, m. 54.

It is advised that one learn the pitches with hands separate, isolating the rotary motion found in both hands. The second step is to practice the hexachord broken up into three groups of double stops, much like in measure five. The stickings for each of the double stops would be (1, 4), (2, 3), (2, 3) later transposed one octave lower. The author also uses the sticking (2, 1) for the A-flat and C sixteenth note triplets which proceed the last stave, buying the performer more time to move ones feet up the full length of the marimba.

CHAPTER 4.1

Miyoshi, Tanaka, Miki; An Aesthetic Comparison of their Works

The three unaccompanied works discussed in this paper share three over-arching aesthetic characteristics; the use of the entire range of the instrument, an extreme dynamic range and contrasting timbral colors, and an expressive, often times cinematic harmonic language which was the zeitgeist of the time. Excerpts across all three pieces will be closely examined in this chapter.

4.2 Range

The concert marimba is perhaps one of the most overtly visual instruments to have serious concert music composed for it. Miyoshi, Tanaka and Miki were aware of this fact, and made great use of the instrument's range, often times forcing the performer into acrobatic movements in order to achieve what was written. It is obvious that the composers utilize the entire range throughout each of the pieces, but the author would like to specifically bring to light the excerpts which do this in a short amount of time, either with several consecutive leaps, or having to strike pitches on opposite ends of the instrument simultaneously. Measures ten and eleven from the third movement of *Torse III* are a great example of navigating the full range of the marimba in a short amount of time.

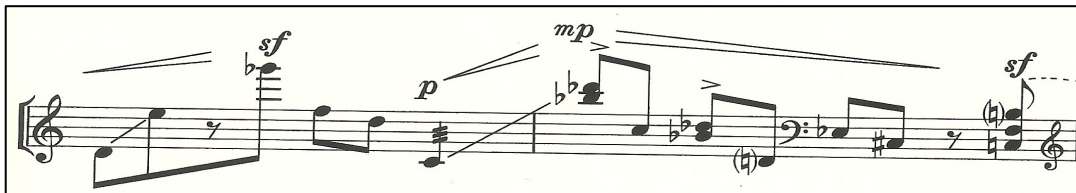


Figure 4.1: Miyoshi, *Torse III* (“Commentaire”), mm. 10-11.

The measure begins with a glissando, followed by a G-flat 6. Measure eleven then terminates with a C3, the lowest pitch available.

Probably the most memorable moment in question is the final chord of the piece, measure forty-five in the fourth movement.

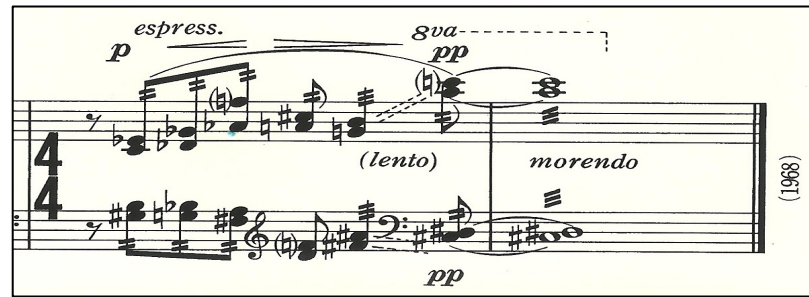


Figure 4.2: Miyoshi, *Torse III* (“Synthese”), mm. 44-45.

The performer must roll on the C#3 as well as the C7 simultaneously. The fact that this is the final image of the performer adds another level of drama, essentially composing the bow into the final cadence.

Each of Tanaka’s *Two Movements for Marimba* has moments that are particularly visually dramatic. Movement I, measures fifty through fifty-two are similar to the excerpt previously mentioned from the third movement of *Torse III*, as the consecutive leaps cover four octaves within two measures at a blisteringly fast tempo.

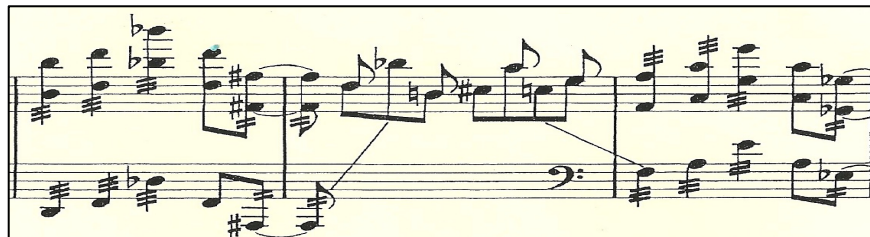


Figure 4.3: Tanaka, *Two Movements for Marimba* (“I”), mm. 50-52.

In movement two of Tanaka's *Two Movements*, measures fifty-four through fifty-six must be mentioned. The left hand starts with an ostinato on D3 and A3, when the thirty-second note run quickly leads the performer to the highest tessitura three and a half octaves higher.

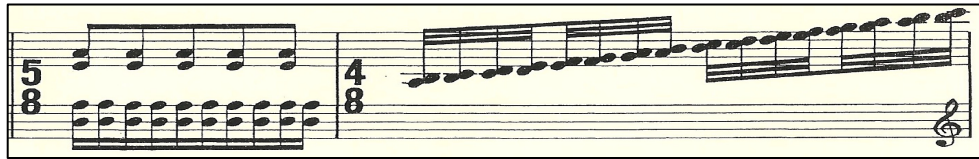


Figure 4.4: Tanaka, *Two Movements for Marimba* ("II"), mm. 54-55.

Miki's *Time for Marimba*, although not as overtly virtuosic as the previously mentioned pieces, still has acrobatic moments. Measure five covers the range of C4 to an A-flat 6, missing the entire range of the instrument by only a major third.

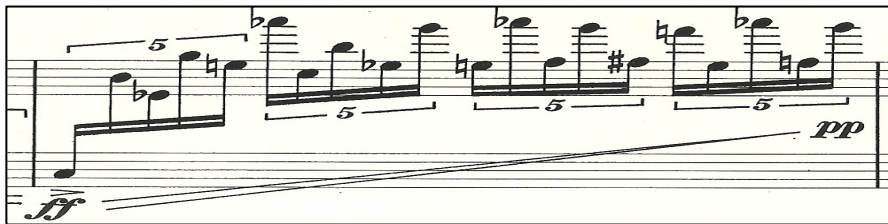


Figure 4.5: Miki, *Time for Marimba*, m. 5.

The pointillistic texture in measure thirty-five covers the range from D3 to G6, and is relentless in its continuous alternation across these four octaves.

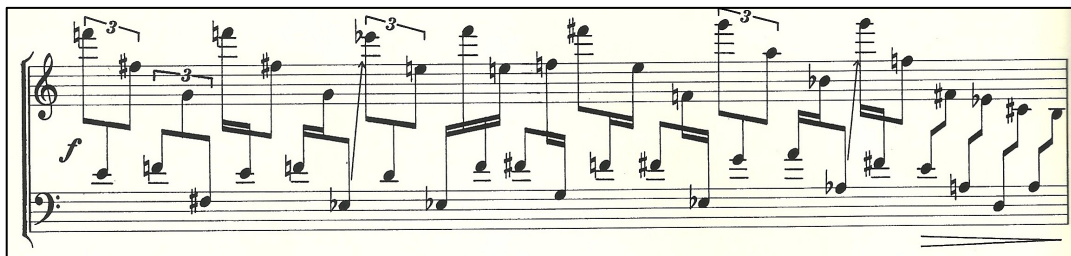


Figure 4.6: Miki, *Time for Marimba*, m. 35.

4.3 Timbre and Dynamic Contrast

Miyoshi's use of contrasting timbral color and dynamic range is evident throughout the entire scope of *Torse III*, but the piece contains a couple of dramatic moments where this is also evident on a micro level. Measure nine of "Synthese," marked as piano and *expressivo*, is a beautiful soaring legato melodic gesture followed by a breath mark. What follows is an articulate presto *FF* gesture, which is jagged and rhythmic in character. This moment is also an example of the importance of having a mallet capable of producing multiple tones.



Figure 4.7: Miyoshi, *Torse III* ("Synthese"), m. 10.

A similar, nearly startling moment occurs in the first movement. A foreboding left hand melodic alternation between G# and A# is following by a *FF* flourish beginning in the highest octave.

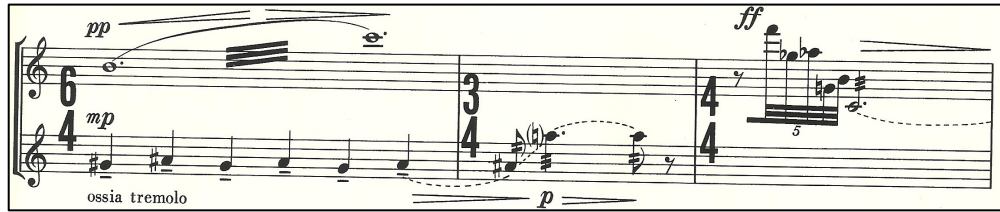


Figure 4.8: Miyoshi, *Torse III* (“These”), mm. 8-10.

In the second movement of Tanaka’s *Two Movements for Marimba*, starting in measure one hundred, the performer must go from rhythmic and athletic *sf* gestures, immediately to a delicate descending *pp* melody in the Tempo I found in measure one hundred and eight. This short passage includes *sf* on the lowest pitch available (C3) as well as *pp* legato timbre on a B-flat 5.

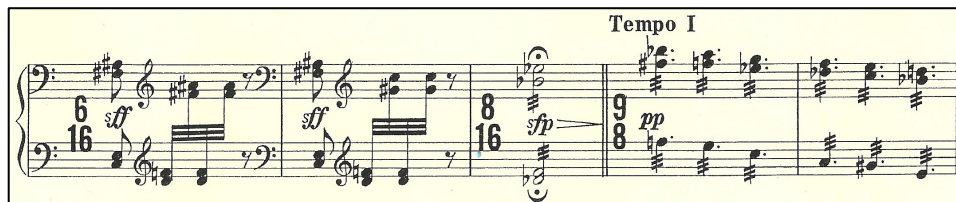


Figure 4.9: Tanaka, *Two Movements for Marimba* (“II”), mm. 100-104.

Miki’s *Time for Marimba*, credited with the implementation of the first two-tone mallet, is truly a study on dramatic timbral and dynamic shifts. The rhythmic and brittle character of the piece is most evident when performing the gesture first found in measure six. Many students and performers have broken marimba bars due to the piece’s dynamic

demands in the low register. It is imperative that the bar be struck on the edge closest to the performer, as the center of the bar is the weakest point of its construction.

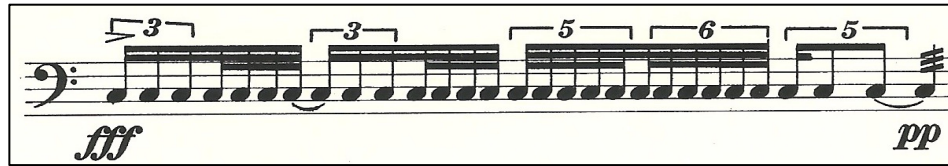


Figure 4.10: Miki, *Time for Marimba*, m. 6.

The passage with the most contrasting timbre and dynamics is found in measures forty-six.

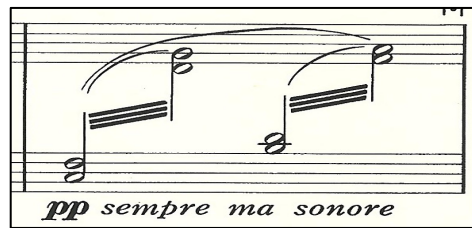


Figure 4.11: Miki, *Time for Marimba*, m. 46.

The passage is marked *pp, sempre ma sonore*. With these two moments in particular, it is clear that timbral and dynamic contrast was at the forefront of Miki's vision for the piece, and it would not be achievable without a new type of mallet.

4.4 Harmonic Examination

Having performed each of these pieces several times, it is apparent that these works share a certain harmonic character associated almost exclusively with this era of marimba pieces. I cannot say that there are any marimba pieces today sharing these same characteristics, making the argument that these are truly art pieces of their time. The

author gathered analytical data including a full examination of every tri-chord and tetra-chord across all three pieces and organized them using concepts detailed in Paul Hindemith's *The Craft of Musical Composition*. Hindemith assembled a chord classification system which organized chords into two large groups; A (chords not containing tri-tones) and B (chords containing tri-tones). Furthermore, group A contained the subgroups I, III, and V and group B contained the subgroups II, IV, VI. The subgroups are delineated by interval content. The author found this method useful, as the three pieces analyzed are post-tonal, but not serial compositions. Also, the main intent was to discover the frequency of chord usage across the three pieces. The sub-categories are defined as follows:

I. No seconds, sevenths, or tri-tones (major and minor triads only)

I.1 root in bass

I.2 root above bass

II. At least one tri-tone, m7, and P5 or M3

II.a contains tri-tone and m7 (only), P5 or M3.

II.b.1 contains tri-tone, P5 or M3, and any M2 or m7

II.b.2 as above but root is above bass

II.b.3 same as II.b.1 or II.b.2, but contains more than one tri-tone

III. No tri-tones, includes seconds and sevenths.

III.1 root in bass

III.2 root above bass

IV. Includes m2 and tri-tones

IV.1 root in bass

IV.2 root above bass

V. No tri-tone, root indeterminate

VI. *Contains tri-tone, root indeterminate*⁴⁵

For the following discussion of Hindemith analysis, please refer the charts located in the appendix. The pie chart depicted in appendix A contains the frequency of chord types found throughout the entire work. It is worth noting that there is symmetry between the usage of IV.2 to III.2 as well as their companions IV.1 and III.1. The author found that III.2 and IV.2 occurred exactly fifty times throughout the work while III.1 and IV.1 appeared eight times respectively. All other chord classifications occur sparingly, including the appearance of one major chord (G-major triad in first inversion). This chord appears on the second to last beat of the second movement. It is the only major or minor triad found in this piece.

Appendix B contains a pie chart depicting the chord usage found in Tanaka's *Two Movements for Marimba*. The most notable difference between the harmonic content in Tanaka's *Two Movements* and Miyoshi's *Torse III* is the variety employed by Tanaka. Tanaka uses all twelve chord-types found in Hindemith's classification system. III.2, like in *Torse III*, is used with the highest frequency.

Appendix C contains a pie chart depicting the chord usage found in Miki's *Time for Marimba*. *Time for Marimba*, similar to *Torse III*, does not have the variety of harmonies found in the *Two Movements*, but there is certainly an unmistakable frequency of III.2 and IV.2. Most notably the piece does not include I.1 or I.2; the piece does not contain any major or minor triads, inverted or otherwise.

⁴⁵ Hindemith, Paul, *The Craft of Musical Composition*, translated by Arthur Mendel, (New York: Schott and Co.) 1970.

After examining all three pieces individually, the author combined the findings into the pie chart found in appendix D. It is important to note that the highest frequency across all pieces was subcategory III.2. Hindemith defines this chord as any chord without a tri-tone, containing any of the following intervals either in combination or by themselves; M2, m2, M7, and/or m7. One could also gather that the pieces have a high volume of tri-tones, given that over half of every chord sounded across all three pieces contains one. Although the most common grouping (III) occurs 43% of the time, the combination of II and IV occurs 52% of the time, as both of these subcategories contain tri-tones.

In addition to the sheer number of chords from the III.2 category, it is also evident that these chords are used in some of the most important moments. Often times these chords will start or end a movement, as well as end a major formal section of the piece. The author then became very curious as to exactly what these chords sounded like, and if they could be described in a less vague or abstract manner. It must be noted that analysis of intervallic content does not give one a complete picture of the composer's intent, and can be used as a tool in analysis along with several other techniques.

The author concludes that the harmony most concisely and accurately depicting the character of these three pieces, is what can be described as quartal or quintal harmony, or merely the stacking of fourths and fifths. It is understandable why this works well on the marimba, as fourths and fifths are the most idiomatic intervals to hold in each hand. Furthermore the performer is holding four mallets and can easily strike four pitches at once, giving symmetry to a stacking of two intervals. All three pieces utilize not only stacked perfect intervals, but also the combination of tri-tones and perfect fourths and

fifths performed simultaneously. The author will provide examples of the prevalent usage of this harmonic device in each of the three works begin discussed.

Measures fourteen in the final movement of *Torse III* uses the technique of contrary planing. The gesture begins and ends with harmonies including a tri-tone (E and B-flat) while the rest of the chords are combinations of perfect fourths.



Figure 4.12: Miyoshi, *Torse III* (“Synthese”), m. 14.

A similar compositional device is used in the same movement in measure forty-two, whereas this time Miyoshi uses parallel motion instead of contrary.



Figure 4.13: Miyoshi, *Torse III*, (“Synthese”), m. 42.

The opening chord in Tanaka’s *Two Movements for Marimba*, movement two, is another quartal chord, but this time the voicing has been condensed and is less obvious.

Still, the interval content is a stacking of perfect fourths (C, F, B-flat, E-flat). The right hand is again an example of melodic planing.



Figure 4.14: Tanaka, *Two Movements for Marimba* (“II”), mm. 1-2.

Miki’s *Time for Marimba* does not have nearly as many dedicated chorale sections as *Torse III* or the Tanaka’s *Two Movements*. The only extended four-voice chorale section is five measures long, and begins in measure forty-six. The first chord is a stacking of perfect fourths and resolves into a B half-diminished seventh chord. Measure forty-seven is a stacking of perfect fifths containing a tri-tone between the A and E-flat, which is spread out between the bass and soprano voices. The following two chords are also both quartal stackings, the last one of the measure containing a tri-tone in the inner voices from A to E-flat.



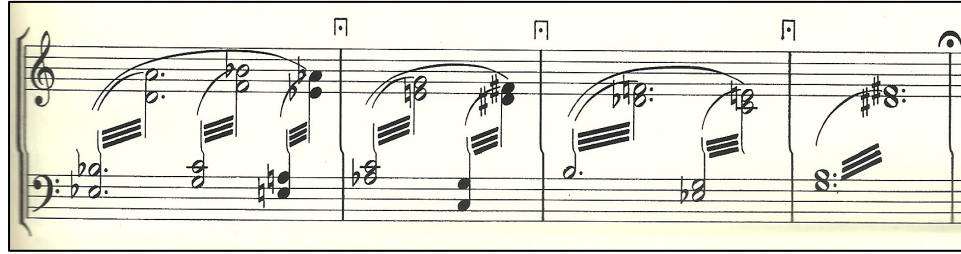


Figure 4.15: Miki, *Time for Marimba*, mm. 46-50.

4.5 Bernard Herrmann Influence

Overall the author has found that Miyoshi, Tanaka and Miki's works share many other harmonic similarities, most notably the use of minor/major seventh chords and half-diminished seventh chords. These chords are both associated with the late nineteenth century, but were re-popularized by film and television music of the 1950s and 60s. Arguably one of the most prominent composers for film during that era was Bernard Herrmann. Many scholars even refer to the minor/major seventh chord as being the "Herrmann chord" or "Hitchcock chord." Herrmann's famous scores for the Alfred Hitchcock films *Psycho* (1960) and *Vertigo* (1958) use this chord extensively.⁴⁶

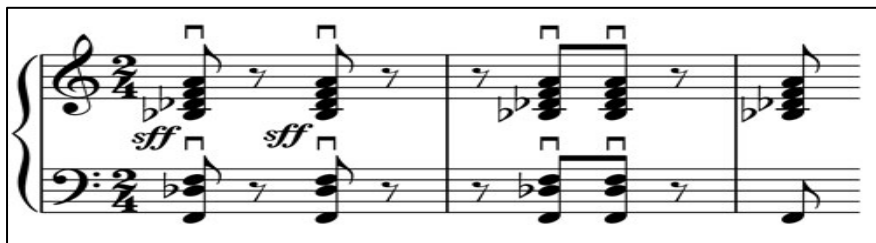


Figure 4.16: Herrmann, *Psycho*, "Prelude," mm. 1-3.

Above is a reduction of the chords used in the beginning of the "Prelude" from

⁴⁶ Mark Richards, *Comparing Bernard Herrmann's Psycho score and Sinfonietta* (1936). Film Music Notes, Jan 18, 2013, 1-2.

the *Psycho* score. Tanaka uses this chord throughout the second movement of *Two Movements* to create unresolved tension. In fact, the chord held for the longest duration throughout the entire piece (measure thirty-three) is a minor/major seventh chord, here found on E-minor. Tanaka was a member of the music section for drama at the NHK Broadcasting Company of Japan from 1958-1973.⁴⁷ During that time he composed music for weekly NHK radio dramas.

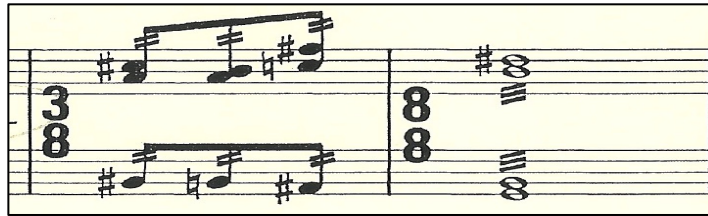


Figure 4.17: Tanaka, *Two Movements* (“II”), mm. 32-33.

Herrmann also used the half-diminished seventh as a major motivic element in his score for *Psycho*.

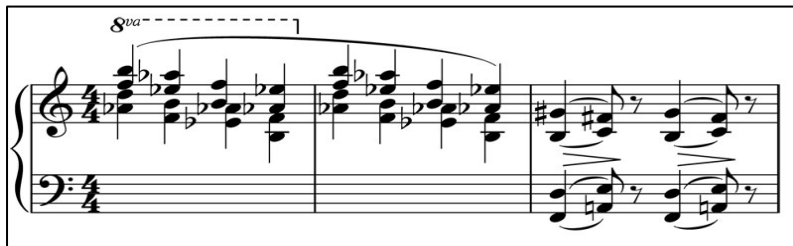


Figure 4.18: Herrmann, *Psycho*, “the City,” mm. 1-3.

Above is an excerpt from “The City” from the score for *Psycho*. The suspenseful mood is created by the alternation of fully-diminished and half-diminished seventh

⁴⁷ Robert Bridge, 45.

chords. This texture of unresolved dissonant seventh chords is found in the chorale writing of Miyoshi, Tanaka and Miki.

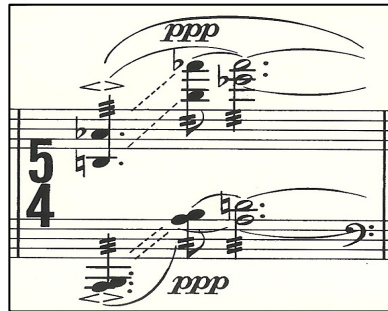


Figure 4.19: Miyoshi, *Torse III*, “Synthese,” m. 43.

The voicing that appears in beat two of the Herrmann score is identical to that found on the last beat of this excerpt from *Torse III* (“Synthese”). It should be noted that this voicing is also identical to what has been named the “Tristan Chord,” found in the opening act from Richard Wagner’s *Tristan and Isolde* (1865). The chord has ever since been associated with longing and desire. Wagner of course did not invent the use of the half-diminished seventh chord, but his usage of it was non-functional and unresolved.

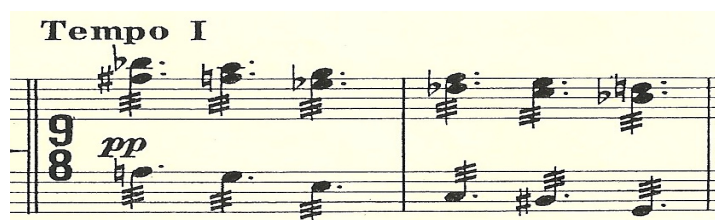


Figure 4.20: Tanaka, *Two Movements for Marimba* (“II”), mm. 108-109.

In the above excerpt, Tanaka creates a similar mood to Herrmann through the use of descending unresolved tri-chords. The first two chords could be analyzed as minor/major seventh chords with omitted fifths, while the passage also contains

augmented and minor triads. Finally, Minoru Miki makes use of the half-diminished seventh chord in the brief chorale found in figure 51. Miki uses both half-diminished and fully-diminished seventh chords to link chromatically to and from quartal and quintal harmonies. It is also known that Miki composed music for film and television early in his career to provide a living for his family.⁴⁸ There is no mistaking that *Torse III*, *Two Movements for Marimba*, and *Time for Marimba* use harmonies similar to the ones found in the scores by Herrmann to create drama and suspense.

⁴⁸ Brian Zator, 6.

CHAPTER 5

Conclusion

The three pieces discussed in this paper helped define the 20th century marimba's voice. The connection to Keiko Abe in combination with the zeitgeist of art music in Japan, created a legacy that has lasted fifty years. The author's hope is that after reading this paper and subsequently studying the scores and listening to recordings, these pieces will be less intimidating to younger students, either as a result of their compositional style or notation. Many students today are drawn to virtuosic, though unsophisticated, pieces written by percussionists who are not skilled composers. The trend is being perpetuated by the prevalence of publishers who, in the author's opinion, do not aspire to pursue very high artistic standards. It is the hope of this author that publishers will find ways to not only cater to the naïve tastes of a portion of their customer base but also to inspire composers, performers and audience members with the art of music today and the landmark works of the past.

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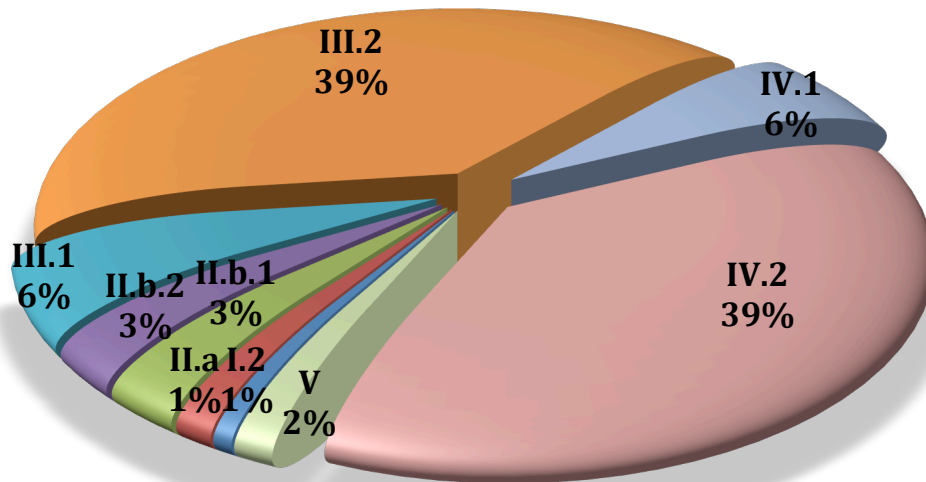
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APPENDIX A

TORSE III CHORD USAGE PIE CHART

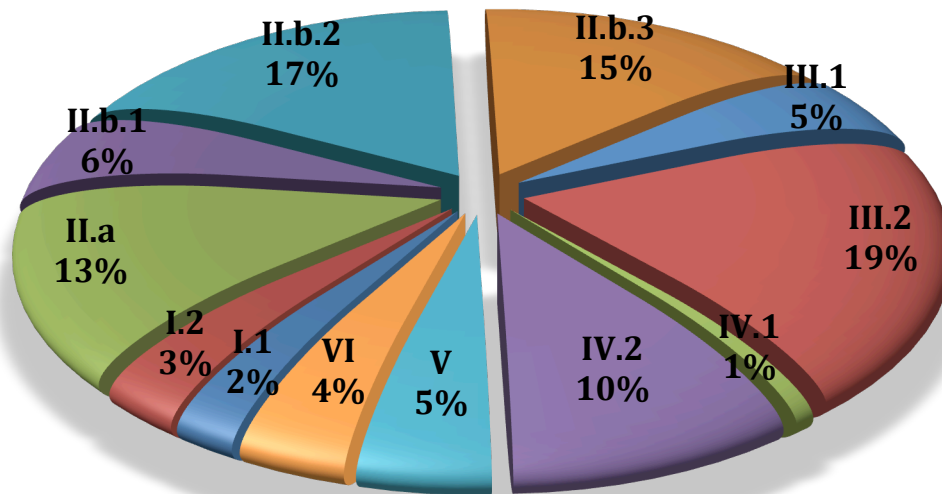
Torse III Chord Usage



APPENDIX B

TWO MOVEMENTS FOR MARIMBA CHORD USAGE PIE CHART

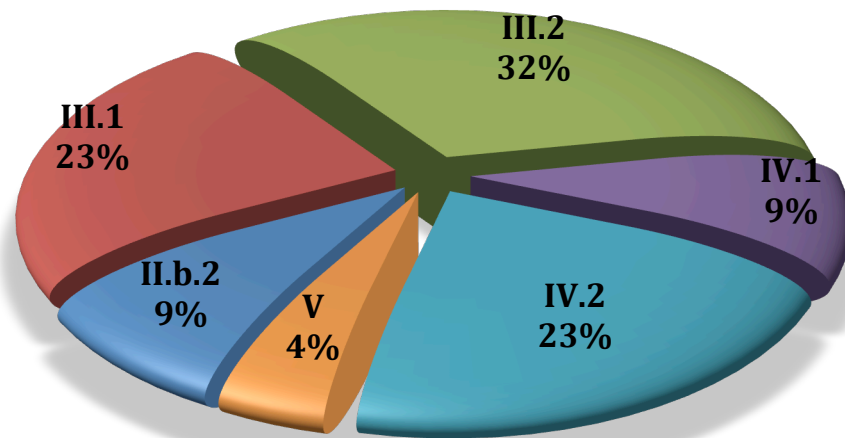
Two Movements for Marimba Chord Usage



APPENDIX C

TIME FOR MARIMBA CHORD USAGE PIE CHART

Time For Marimba Chord Usage

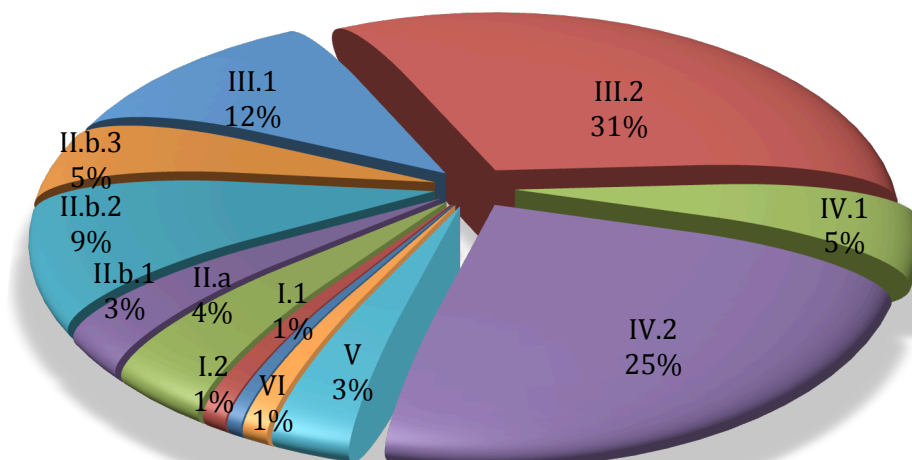


APPENDIX D

PERCENTAGE OF CHORD USAGE BY MIYOSHI, TANAKA, AND MIKI PIE

CHART

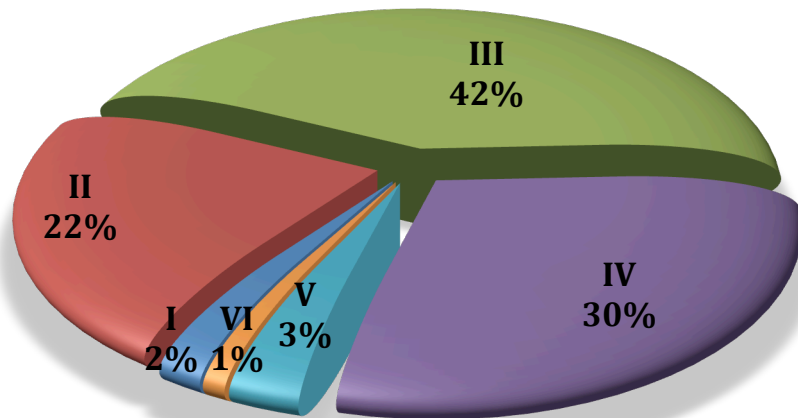
Percentage of Chord Usage by Miyoshi, Tanaka and Miki (including sub-categories)



APPENDIX E

COMBINED CHORD USAGE ACROSS ALL WORKS, WITHOUT SUBGROUPS

Combined Chord Usage Across all Three Works, Without Sub-groups



APPENDIX F

COMBINED CHORD USAGE ACROSS ALL THREE WORKS A AND B ONLY

Combined Chord Usage Across All Three Works A and B Only

