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PRACTICING ORCHESTRAL PERCUSSION EXCERPTS

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ABSTRACT

This thesis is about my own work preparing percussion orchestral excerpts that are often asked in auditions. The fundament of this work is my daily practice compared with describing blogs, books and teachers opinion and at the end, I show how I found my own way of performing the excerpt that might help others to find their ways. The purpose with this work is to contribute to an open discussion about this topic with other percussionists. As a result, I have become more independent in this process and have a more conscious practice time, focused in finding solutions in a creatively way to the problems I find.

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. BACKGROUND

My first contact with percussion playing dates back to when I was 7 years old but my start playing in an orchestra was when, at the age of 11, I gained access to the Conservatory of Music in Gijón, in my hometown. I started there with the subject of orchestra. At the same time, I also became a member of the *Wind Orchestra of Gijón*. In both ensembles, I learn the basics of how to play in an orchestra, how to work in the percussion section, etc. At the age of 18, I entered at *Conservatorio Superior de Música Óscar Espla* in Alicante to study higher education in music, in a Bachelor in Percussion Interpretation Programme. I received there my first orchestral repertory lessons but I also had the opportunity to attend different master classes and courses about it with different international teachers. At the Conservatory, I had also subjects such as “Wind Orchestra” and “Orchestra” where I could play different interesting pieces and I could work on them with my teachers. At the same time, I also joined the wind orchestra where I am still a member (*Sociedad Musical La Amistad de Villafranqueza*).

At the age of 19, I won the audition for timpani position in the *Orquesta Filarmónica de la Universidad de Alicante* and I was member for the next seven years. It gave me much experience as timpanist and I learn more about how to play in an orchestra.

At the age of 20, I was also member or guest in different youth orchestras in Spain (*Jove Orquestra de la Generalitat Valenciana, Orquesta Joven de Extremadura...*) and professional wind orchestras such as *Banda Municipal de Alicante*. It was around this age when I realised that I would like to be a professional orchestral percussionist in the future. I enjoyed a lot playing in these different projects, specially on the nineteenth and twentieth century pieces with huge percussion sections and I started to become very interested in orchestral repertoire, how to play it, why playing it in a particular way, how to work in each percussion section, etc.

At the age of 22, I finished my Bachelor but I didn't have the opportunity in my country to do any audition for professional orchestras because nowadays there are rarely open positions for orchestras in Spain. I also had few opportunities to do auditions for youth orchestras. It seemed that I should forget my future as a professional percussionist and try to become a teacher, although I continued playing in these different youth orchestras and having private orchestral repertory lessons.

When I was 25 I worked in a public music school full-time for 10 months in Tenerife, and I could save enough money to do some auditions abroad. After this period, I saw auditions to *Master Programme in Orchestra Performance*. I tried it and here I am.

1.2. PURPOSE AND QUESTIONS

The aim of this thesis is to investigate how to practice and perform percussion excerpts. I want to develop a deeper knowledge on percussion excerpts and investigate the possible ways to play them. I review and analyse how to play them in a way where I could learn about it, find my own way to do it and show my own process. I would like to contribute to an open discussion about excerpts with other percussionists and I also would like to improve my autonomy in playing excerpts, find my own way to perform them and try to prepare them for auditions.

I also want to discuss different ways to play excerpts and which are the advantages and disadvantages of each way of playing them.

1.3. METHOD

The basis of my method is to write a diary at the same time as I practice the percussion orchestral excerpts. I started to write about each excerpt from the very beginning of my practice (when I started listening the music, checked when it starts in my part, etc), captured things like which sticks should I use, which sticking could I do, etc. I added then my knowledge of the excerpt from lessons, feed back, etc.

I also studied and tried out practically what other percussionists think about how to play the same excerpts as the ones I work on. I looked for information in books, blogs, websites, etc to compare it with my own experience.

With the method described above came a deeper understanding of each excerpt as I express in the diary every problem that appears, and then I could find solutions by myself. I found that the diary helped me to be more organized in my daily practice and that I also could remember better my previous session of practice. It also made me more conscious of my choices because my reflection was more visible and verbalized. It created knowledge that I use in my performance. It helped me to think more deeply about problems, solutions, options, etc in each excerpt.

1.4. MATERIAL

Percussion Instruments and their history, by James Blades is well-known by all professional musicians as it was the first book about percussion history and one of the few ones that still exist.¹ It has information about the percussion instruments from the primitive cultures until the decade of 1960, moreover has some technical and repertory information about different percussion instruments. James Blades (1901-1999) was an English percussionist. He was professor in the Royal Academy of Music in London and he was also associated with B. Britten with whom he experimented with new effects in the orchestral percussion. *The logic of it all* by Joe Sinai and Anthony Cirone is also a well known book that has examples of different techniques for orchestral percussion and comments about different percussion

¹ James Blades, *Percussion Instruments and their history* (London: Faber and Faber, 1970)

excerpts.² Anthony J. Cirone (1940) was percussionist in San Francisco Symphonic orchestra and professor in San José State University for more than 30 years. He composed more than 100 works for percussion including very famous percussion technique methods well-known to worldwide percussionists.³ Joe Sinai did not graduate from a university or conservatory and his education came from vaudeville houses and different concerts. He had a great interest for percussion. He became professional in *San Francisco Symphonic orchestra* in 1915 and was the record number of 55 years active in it. He was 82 when *The logic of it all* was published.⁴

Modern School for Snare Drum, by Morris Goldenberghas become a standard text and excerpt source. The *Goldenberg Book* has been used by generations of orchestral snare drum players to develop their skills. As well as studies and etudes, this book includes excerpts of major orchestral repertoire for snare drum and all the instruments of the percussion family. This edition, edited by Tony Cirone, includes phrasings and sticking along with re-engraved etudes. This book is the primary source for percussionists to learn proper technique and important orchestral repertoire.⁵ Goldenberg was a famed percussionist, teacher, and author. His work revolved around New York, where in 1938 he became percussionist at *WOR New York Radio Orchestra*. He played for recordings, film scores, TV commercials, served on the NBC-TV staff, and eventually performed for most of the major conductors. His fame as a teacher stems from his affiliation with the *Juilliard School of Music* from 1941 to 1969.⁶ I also used a Spanish book for snare drum excerpts: *La caja orquestal*, by Manel Ramada. This book is a guide with tips about snare drum techniques and tips of how to play the most common snare drum orchestral excerpts in auditions.⁷ He is Professor in *Conservatorio Superior de Zaragoza* (Spain) since 1986, freelance in all major orchestras in Spain, member of different chamber music ensembles and endorser of percussion brands as Sabian, Vic Firth or Pearl.⁸

Another more recent book is *A Guide to the Instruments and their sources*, by James Holland.⁹ Holland was born in London and studied at Trinity College of Music. He joined the London Philharmonic in 1956, moving to the *London Symphony Orchestra* as principal in 1962. After joining the newly formed London Sinfonietta in 1969 he moved from the *Los Angeles Symphony Orchestra* to the BBC Symphony in 1972,

² Anthony J. Cirone and Joe Sinai, *The logic of it all: Professional secrets applying imagination to percussion techniques* (California: Cirone publications, 1977)

³ "Anthony J. Cirone", last modified 2010, <http://www.meredithmusic.com/anthony-j-cirone>

⁴ "Joe Sinai", last modified 2010 <http://www.meredithmusic.com/joe-sinai-san-francisco-symphony>

⁵ Morris Goldenberg, *Modern School for Snare Drum*. (USA: Chapell, 1955)

⁶ "Morris Goldenberg", www.pas.org/experience/.../GoldenbergMorris.aspx

⁷ Manel Ramada, *La caja orquestal* (Valencia: Tot per l'aire, 2000)

⁸ "Manel Ramada", last modified 2014, http://www.perkuva.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=section&id=13&Itemid=18

⁹ James Holland. *A Guide to the Instruments and their sources* (England: Sacrecrow Press, 2005)

the start of the Pierre Boulez years. Combining the Sinfonietta and the BBC positions meant he was very involved in the contemporary music scene. He and David Johnson started the *London Percussion Ensemble* in the sixties.¹⁰

The newest books I used are the ones that I find that give more detailed information about practicing excerpts. They are *Symphonic repertoire for percussion accessories* by Tim Genis and *Symphonic repertoire for keyboard percussion* by Jack Van Geem.^{11 12} Both were students of Anthony J. Cirone and as him have career as orchestral musician but also as a pedagogue. Tim Genis is principal timpanist of *Boston Symphony Orchestra* but he also plays in some of the best orchestras around the world. He teaches also in Boston, gives masterclasses around the world and have his own line of sticks.¹³ Jack Van Geem is Principal percussionist in *San Francisco Symphony* and teaches in *San Francisco Conservatory* and in *Colburn School of Music in Los Angeles*. Apart from orchestra he is a brilliant marimba player.¹⁴

I often use the book *Orchester Probespiel* by Gschwendtner and Ulrich to practice different excerpts.¹⁵ It is a compilation of timpani and percussion excerpts commonly asked in auditions.

Different websites and blogs as *PAS (Percussive Arts Society)*,¹⁶ *W. Lee Vinson, Percussion*,¹⁷ *Grover Pro Percussion* or *Westchester percussion* contain information about percussion orchestral excerpts. *PAS* is the largest percussion association in the world.^{18 19} It is a music serve organization promoting percussion education, research, performance and appreciation and offers students, teachers and professionals many valuable learning tools and provides a number of print and online resources that can be used in lessons or that can be incorporated into your daily practice routine. *W. Lee Vinson, Percussion* is a website with information about

¹⁰ "James Holland", last modified October 2014, http://www.naxos.com/person/James_Holland/63452.htm

¹¹ Jack Van Geem, *Symphonic repertoire for keyboard percussion* (USA: Meredith Music Publications, 2008)

¹² Tim Genis, *Symphonic repertoire for percussion accessories* (USA: Meredith Music Publications, 2009)

¹³ Genis, *symphonic repertoire*, 80

¹⁴ Van Geem, *symphonic repertoire*, 87

¹⁵ Hermann Gschwendtner and Hans Jochen Ulrich, *Orchester Probespiel. Test pieces for orchestral auditions. Pauke, Schlagzeug* (Mainz: Schott, 1993)

¹⁶ Percussive Arts Society, accessed March 18, 2014. <http://www.pas.org>

¹⁷ W. Lee Vinson, <http://leevinson.com>

¹⁸ Westchester Percussion, <http://www.westchesterpercussion.com>

¹⁹ Grover Pro Percussion, <http://groverpro.com>

different excerpts and exercises Mr Vison created to help to practice the excerpts. He is a percussionist that worked in many orchestras, mainly in *Boston Symphonic Orchestra* but also he is an educator in *Boston University*. I specially liked Lee Vinson's blog. He has different sections as articles about orchestral percussion, technical exercises to practice orchestral excerpts and some information about himself. This thesis has in common with his work that we find creative technical exercises to solve technical problems in orchestral percussion excerpts. *Grover Pro Percussion* is a commercial website of the brand Grover but where you can find some articles about percussion playing. *Westchester percussion* is a site created by Don Perlman (percussionist in *Hudson Valley Winds Orchestra* and *Westchester symphonic winds*, musician in Broadway among other projects), Ken Ross (afro-Cuban specialist, musician in Broadway and endorser of different brands) and Damon Jackson (live and studio drummer based in New York) where you can find different articles about percussion.

I also have taken information from Nick Bonaccio or David Valdés.^{20 21} Nick Bonaccio is currently pursuing a Bachelor's degree in Applied Percussion at the Eastman School of Music in Rochester, New York. He shares some of his notes about excerpts in his blog. David Valdés is a Spanish freelancer percussionist who is making a blog about different excerpts and percussion curiosities. I found very interesting the information in David Valdés' blog *Percusize Me!*. He publishes some articles about orchestral excerpts mixed with information about different instruments and I think this thesis has similarities with his blog as he bases in his own practice. Neither Vinson nor Valdés discuss other solutions in their blogs.

I also use recordings to listen to the excerpts I work on. When I chose a recording for listening, I choose the ones with conductors, orchestras or percussion players I like or I find interesting.

The teachers I use as sources are Hans Hernqvist, Roger Carlsson and Fredrik Björilin. Hans Hernqvist was former percussionist in *Stocholm's Philharmonic Orchestra* and currently is principal timpanist in *Göteborgs Symfoniker* and teacher in Academy of Music and Drama where he teaches timpani. Roger Carlsson was timpanist in *Swedish Radio Symphony Orchestra* and currently is principal timpani in *Göteborgs Symfoniker* and teacher in the Academy of Music and Drama. Both Hans Hernqvist and Roger Carlsson are the Instrumental Advisors at the *Master Programme of Orchestra Performance*. Fredrik Björilin is currently assistant of percussion in *Göteborgs Symfoniker*.

^{20 20} David Valdés, February 18, 2011. Comment on *Percusize me!* Blog, Xilófono - El pájaro de fuego. <http://www.davidvaldespercusion.blogspot.se>

²¹ NBPC Percussion, Nick Bonaccio, June 3, 2011, posted *Firebird Xylophone Excerpt Notes*. NBPC Percussion <http://nbpercussion.blogspot.com.es>

1.5. CONTENT OF THIS THESIS

In this thesis I include the work I have done with different excerpts. I organize them by instruments. First, it is snare drum excerpts, including two excerpts by S. Prokofiev: *Peter and the Wolf* and *Lieutenant Kijé*, and *Concerto for Orchestra* by B. Bartok (the only one that I did not prepare for an audition, but for I did play with the orchestra. It is in commonly asked in auditions, too). Then, I included two tambourine excerpts which are very commonly asked in auditions and they are very different between them: *Four Sea Interludes*, by B. Britten and *Carnival Overture* by A. Dvorák. Then, I included excerpts for mallet instruments. First it is two excerpts for xylophone: *The Firebird*, by I. Stravinsky and *Second Cello Concerto*, by D. Shostakovich. Glockenspiel excerpts that I have included are three: *La mer*, by C. Debussy, *Sorcerer's Apprentice*, by P. Dukas and *Pines of Rome*, by O. Respighi. Only one timpani excerpt is included as an example of how I would work on this instrument but this thesis is especially focused on percussion excerpts. I chose these excerpts because I needed to practice them for auditions and they are commonly asked in other auditions.

This thesis resembles the well-known percussion blogs in that it also is based on own practice but the difference is that I compare my solutions with others, analyse advantages and disadvantages of each excerpt, try practically the different options and then I decide what it is my best way of playing.

2. PERCUSSION EXCERPTS

2.1. EXCERPTS FOR SNARE DRUM

2.1.1. PETER AND THE WOLF, by Sergej Prokofiev (1936)

Peter und der Wolf

Sergej Prokofjew
op. 67

④ L'istesse tempo ♩=100

ff *fp < f* *fp < f*

ff *fp < f* *fp < f*

Music example 1. Snare drum excerpt of *Peter and the Wolf* by S. Prokofiev. Rehearsal figure 49.²²

Look at video number 1 to see my performance of this excerpt.

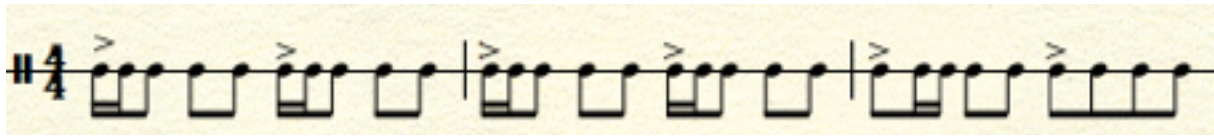
This excerpt is close to the end of the piece. The wolf is hunted so Peter has this triumphal march. In the percussion section, the snare drum plays together with the timpani who play half notes. In the orchestra, it is a tutti part, where the melody is played by french horns and trumpets and the rhythm and march character is on the role of the snare drum.

This is an excerpt for military drum.⁵ Morris Goldenberg says that this excerpt "Is a straightforward military march-style drum solo. It should be played with plenty of vigor and bravura. This solo is often played on the snare drum but is preferable on the field drum. The same applies to the excerpt from Prokofiev's fifth Symphony".²³ Here, Goldenberg compares both excerpts because of their similarity.

²² Gschwendtner and Ulrich, *Probespiel*, 69.

⁵ This kind of drum is similar to a snare drum but the drum is larger. It is used for military music and it has a deeper and darker sound than a usual orchestral snare drum.

²³ Goldenberg, *Modern School*, 84



Music example 2. Example of snare drum part of *Fifth Symphony* by S. Prokofiev.

I agree with him that it should have a march character moreover to use a big military drum, as it is specified in the piece. This drum gives a dark sound and a more marching sound.

First, I listen to the music and play together with the recording.²⁴

I focused on every bar to find out which sticking should I use. In the first bar I tried to play the eight notes as single strokes (R-L-R-L etc) and then with only one hand, in my case, the right hand, as that is my good hand. Finally, I decided to play it with single strokes as they sound even and it looked better than playing all the notes with the same hand. In percussion, when you play every note of the same length with the same hand it is to make it even. In some excerpts this technique is very useful but in others I can manage to play it single.

In the second bar I tried to start the figure with the right hand and then change to the left hand. I prefer starting the second bar with the right hand and that way every note sounds even.

In percussion, sometimes we play with a *guiding hand* and sometimes alternating hands. Playing with a *guiding hand* means that a hand plays all the time the same rhythm and the other hand plays the other notes. The advantage of this, is that as you are playing notes as same distance in time (for example, quarter notes all the time, or eight notes all the time), the movement is the same all the time and totally continued so the sound is more controlled and even. The disadvantages of this is also that as you are doing the *guiding hand* with the good hand usually, maybe the other notes played with the “bad hand” don’t sound with the same volume as the other ones. Sometimes the solution is to play *guiding hand* with the bad hand; it depends of the difficulty of the excerpt.

I find this first bar also like an exercise to make my both hands even (I use to do technical exercises to make my hands even and this is a good opportunity to put them in use). For example, I do an exercise combining single alternated strokes with repeating-the-same-hand strokes to make them even. For example: I do the same exercise but changing to the opposite hand.

²⁴ S. Prokofiev. *Peter and the wolf*. Chamber orchestra of Europe, conducted by Claudio Abbado. Deutsche Grammophon, 1990.

S. Prokofiev. *Peter and the wolf*. Wiener Philharmoniker, conducted by Karl Böhm. Deutsche Grammophon, 0289 415 3502 3, 1985.



Music example 3. Exercise I created for practice to make both hands even.

To feel the tempo and activate before, I thought about a trick that I can do as the mock audition will be with screen: play “in the air” some eight notes before starting. This is good to set the tempo. It consists in making the same movements as the ones you will play so you activate before you start playing. This is sometimes used in the orchestra because of this reason explained above.

I looked at this excerpt in *La caja orquestal* and I realised that Manel Ramada does the same sticking as I do.²⁵ He recommends to give a march character and to try to not push the triplets and to feel the tempo relying on the accents.

I tried to not “triplet” the rhythm as easily happens when you play rhythms like this before triplets.

I also made other exercises to not rush when playing triplets, for example, mixing these motives with eight notes:



Music example 4. Exercise for making the triplets rhythmically even, useful for some motives of *Peter and the Wolf*, for all the bars with this kind of triplet of sixteenth notes.

In bar 3 I tried to not accent the first note of the sextuplet.

Then, I played bars 1 to 3. All this time I was practicing with the metronome but then, I started to practice it without metronome and I found a tendency to delay, so I continued practicing with metronome.

The next day I continued with all of this and I continued with bar 4 and first half of bar 5. Most of the problems I could find in the following bars are already solved from the previous session.

Now, another different question is about the roll. First I was practicing it like an orchestral roll, a “pression” roll. The most common roll that we use in the orchestra is the pression roll. This roll consists in playing with each hand 3 bouncing strokes very fast. I use only the arm, so I move from the elbow to the wrist with the wrist staying fixed. The roll can have more or less pressure, depending on the style of the piece,

²⁵ Ramada, *La caja orquestal*, page 18.

the acoustic of the hall or other reasons. Another roll is the double stroke roll that consists of 2 bouncing notes with each hand. I do this roll moving the wrist and the arm. First note is played with a down movement and second note in an up movement. This roll is more used in military fields and in American style pieces.

La caja orquestal suggests that the *Peter and the wolf* roll is a double stroke roll, that means playing R-R-L-L very fast. It would be like this:



Music example 5. Snare drum part of *Peter and the Wolf* by Sergej Prokofiev. Example from *La caja orquestal* by Manel Ramada. He explains with this example how to read the roll.

It is important to not accent the *forte*, as it doesn't have an accent.

In a lesson with Roger Carlsson about how to play this excerpt, he advised me not to play double stroke roll, but a pression roll.

Considering these 2 options, I prefer the pression roll. It is not often in orchestra that you play the double stroke roll as it is more related with military music or American style and I find that playing a pression roll is more with the style of Prokofiev. On the other hand this should be in a military sound style and for that the double stroke roll would be more suitable.

I realise also that in bar 9 I must repeat one hand to start the next bar with R hand, as the similar ones than this.

I got the following advice from Roger Carlsson about thinking in how to make it in the style:

- Thinking *alla breve*. It is written 4/4 bar, but it is true that the music is feeling in 2 and thinking in *alla breve* gives a more fluent and a musical sound.
- Imagine the melody in your head for give it the right character.
- Thinking to a relaxing tempo, and don't rush. He realises also that I have a tendency to rush in the second part of each beat so I practice it more with the metronome.
- Play it with more march character.

So the example of sticking for the whole excerpt will be this:

Peter und der Wolf

Sergej Prokofjew

④ 99 L'istesso tempo $\text{♩} = 100$ Op. 67

The image shows a musical score for snare drum from the piece 'Peter und der Wolf' by Sergei Prokofiev. It is rehearsal figure 49, marked 'L'istesso tempo' with a tempo of quarter note = 100. The score consists of four staves of music. Above and below the notes, stickings are indicated with 'R' for right hand and 'L' for left hand. Some notes have accents (>) and there are triplets marked with a '3'. Dynamics include fortissimo (ff) and forte (f). The score ends with a double bar line and repeat dots.

Music example 6. Snare drum part of S. Prokofiev, *Peter and the wolf*. Rehearsal figure 49 with suggested sticking by me.²⁶

²⁶ Gschwendtner and Ulrich, *Probespiel*, 69

2.1.2. LIEUTENIANT KIJÉ, by Sergej Prokofiev (1934)

The image shows a musical score for a snare drum solo. It consists of three staves. The top staff is for the snare drum, the middle for the piccolo flute, and the bottom for the piccolo flute. The tempo is marked 'Andante assai' and 'Doppio movimento'. The dynamic is 'pp' (pianissimo). The score includes a rehearsal mark '1' and a tempo marking '(♩ = c. 120)'. The snare drum part starts with a grace note and is followed by a series of eighth notes. The piccolo flute part starts with a series of eighth notes and then has a rest.

Music example 7. Excerpt of snare drum of *Lieutenant Kijé* by S. Prokofiev. Rehearsal figure 1.²⁷

Look at video number 2 to look my performance of this excerpt.

This piece is about a clerk, that while writing out the morning orders for his Imperial majesty Tsar Paul, miscopies two words, creating a *Lieutenant Kijé*. The Tsar learns of his "existence", and issues numerous orders concerning him. The palace administrators have no choice but to carry them out.

After listening to some recordings, I made an idea of this excerpt:²⁸ It is a solo and the snare drum starts completely alone. The beginning of the piece is a trumpet solo of 5 bars. The trumpet is completely alone and has a solemn character. Then, the snare drum starts alone but the character change to a march character. At bar 5 of rehearsal figure 1, it joins the piccolo flute to the snare drum and at bar 9, the flute joins to both of them. The melody is very rhythmical and in a march style.

With just a first sight I can see that the difficulties for this excerpt were:

- 1) Grace notes in so soft dynamic
- 2) Clarity of the grace notes
- 3) Eight notes even
- 4) Tempo

Before to start practicing this excerpt, I prepared many technical exercises to play grace notes in very soft nuances to solve the problems in this excerpt. It is a very difficult technical excerpt. Fredrik Björlin recommended me to practice a lot in this excerpt as it is often asked in auditions.

²⁷ Lee Vinson, music, *20 minutes Kijé*, accessed tenth October 2014.

²⁸ S. Prokofiev. *Lieutenant Kijé Suite*. Chicago Symphony Orchestra. RCA Victor, 09026-61957-2, 1995.

S.Prokofiev. *Lieutenant Kijé*. London Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Claudio Abbado. Deutsche Grammophon, 447 419-2, 1980.

I found in Lee Vinson’s blog the following exercises to practice this excerpt. It is a 20 minutes routine for daily practice on this excerpt. Lee Vinson simplified one bar and he added more notes increasing the difficulty. The exercises are the following ones:



Music example 8. Technical exercises “20 minutes Kije” by Lee Vinson.²⁹

To start with this excerpt, I played it through and I did many exercises to practice soft grace notes. I did this with metronome.

Then, I just concentrated at the end of the fourth bar and beginning of the fifth bar. I practiced it slower as it is not very clear.



Music example 9. Snare drum part of *Peter and the Wolf* (1934). End of fourth bar and beginning of fifth bar.

After this, I concentrated in grace notes techniques.

Then, I found the following problems:

- 1) Tempo in the first 2 bars
- 2) Make even the first notes with flam of 3 notes grace note.³⁰
- 3) Stay with right hand as “guiding hand” in bars 7 and 8.

²⁹ Lee Vinson, music, *20 minutes Kijé*, accessed tenth October 2014.

³⁰ This word is used in percussion for the short grace note before the beat.

To solve these problems, I found the following solutions:

- 1) I used the same trick as with the *Peter and the wolf* excerpt, and as the mock audition is with screen, I did some quarter notes in the air before starting. Then, I also did the pauses in the air so then the tempo becomes more stable.
- 2) I practiced 3-notes grace notes very slow and I create exercises to practice more on this. Also, I concentrate in doing the same movements and listen well what I have played before to imitate it after.
- 3) As I used to do flams as right hand doing the grace note and left hand doing the real note, I sometimes didn't play the flams with the opposite hands clear. So I created also some technical exercises to practice this. This is just a technical problem that I can solve practicing it some minutes every day. I found some very interesting technical exercises in Lee Vinson's blog.³¹ I like them and I think they are useful as a routine to practice this excerpt 20 minutes per day.

Roger C. advised me that I should improve it concentrating in playing the grace notes more exactly.

He and Hans H. said that it is possible to play it more *piano* than I did, although it is a very risky and difficult excerpt as it is with a very soft dynamic and with many grace notes. I find it very difficult technically.

Fredrik Björlin told me that I should play the grace notes measured. For example, thinking that the first note of the grace doesn't start in the previous sixteenth note. So then, I realise that he thinks that 3-grace notes should be played faster than 2-grace notes or 1-grace note. I think this is very good to feel better the tempo, as also the grace notes are measured. So another kind of work with this excerpt begins here: Measuring grace notes.

³¹ <http://leevinson.com/kije.pdf>

2.1.3. CONCERTO FOR ORCHESTRA, by Béla Bartók (1943). Movement II *Giuoco delle coppie*



Music example 10. Snare drum part of *Concerto for Orchestra*, Second movement. First 9 bars.

Look at video number 3 to look my recording of this excerpt.

This is an excerpt that is commonly asked in auditions. I played the concerto with the *University of Gothenburg Symphony Orchestra* on February 2014.

Just to say that the beginning and the end of the movement is a solo of the snare drum. The snare drum excerpts open the movement. During 8 bars the snare drum plays completely alone and at the end, last 4 bars are also alone. Although it is not a complicated rhythm, it is needed to have it really well prepared to play it in the orchestra. All the focus of the audience, the rest of the musicians in the orchestra and the conductor will be on you. The other parts during the movement are in *piano* but they are also exposed and they work as a dialogue with the trumpets.

First I listened to some recordings and then I started to work with it.³² I found difficult to maintain the tempo and to make the strokes that don't have accents even, so after having some first sights, I start to practice it at "Quarter note =94".

As a curiosity about the tempo in this movement, Sir Georg Solti said this about it:³³

When preparing these two works for the recording I was determined that the tempi should be exactly as Bartók wrote and this led me to some extraordinary discoveries, chief of which was in the second movement of the *Concerto for Orchestra*. The printed score gives' crotchet equals 74, which is extremely slow, but I thought that I must follow what it says. When we rehearsed I could see that the musicians didn't like it at all and in the break the side drum player (who starts the movement with a solo) came to me and said

³² B. Bartók. *The legendary Fritz Reiner-Chicago Symphony Orchestra. Concerto for orchestra*. RCA, 09026-61504-2, 1993.

B. Bartók. *Concerto for orchestra. Music for strings, percussion and celesta*. Berliner Philharmonie. EMI classics, 72434 76397 2, 1974.

B. Bartók. *Concerto for orchestra*. San Francisco Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Herbert Blomstedt. DECCA, 443 773-2, 1995.

³³ 1912-1917, Hungarian Conductor, contemporaneous of Bartók

"Maestro, my part is marked crotchet equals 94", which I thought must be a mistake, since none of the other parts have a tempo marking. The only way to check was to locate the manuscript and through the courtesy of the Library of Congress in Washington we obtained a copy of the relevant page, which not only clearly showed crotchet equals 94, but a tempo marking of "Allegro scherzando" (the printed score gives "Allegretto scherzando"). Furthermore, Bartók headed it "Presentando le coppie" (Presentation of the couples), not *Giuoco delle coppie* (Game of the couples). I was most excited by this, because it becomes a quite different piece. The programme of the first performance in Boston clearly has the movement marked "Allegro scherzando" and the keeper of the Bartók archives was able to give us further conclusive evidence that the faster tempo must be correct. I have no doubt that thousands of performances, including my own up to now, have been given at the wrong speed!³⁴

I noticed that sometimes it is difficult to maintain the tempo because of the different back beats.

Manel Ramada marked the following sticking that is more persuading to me, because they make the strokes even.³⁵



Music example 11. Snare drum part of *Concerto for Orchestra* by B. Bartók, *Second movement*, from the beginning until bar 9. Sticking that I use.

I ended up with doing this sticking. The reason to do this sticking is that if the movement is with one hand, the control is better and the sound would be more even as the movement of the different strokes would be approximately the same. Playing it with single strokes (one hand each note) the sound would be more uneven as it is more difficult to make 2 or more strokes even using different hands than playing them with the same hand.

³⁴ *Concerto for orchestra* (Bartók), last modified twenty-seventh June 2014, [ó\(k\)http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Concerto_for_Orchestra_\(Bartók\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Concerto_for_Orchestra_(Bartók))

³⁵ Ramada, *La caja orquestal*, page 13.

I played the accents with the left hand to give the right hand some rest moreover to make a different, stronger sound, and also to be able to control each accent more, as all accents then will be played with the left hand.

Ramada also recommends to play it on a medium-big size drum to make a deeper and dark sound. He also suggests to use the back of the stick in the left hand to play the accents. I agree in his sticking but I don't agree with this as the left hand only play accents. In my opinion, it is not difficult to make the accents with the stick in normal position as the left hand only plays accents. In one of the rehearsals, Hans Hernqvist advised me to not play the accents too strong. I was playing them with the stick in normal position and he thought they sounded too strong, so turning the stick and hitting with the thicker back of it would be even worse.

I have some notes from a repertory lesson I had during my bachelor with my teacher Joan Soriano about the phrasing. I didn't have many notes but it seems that we talked a lot about the phrasing. A doubt comes to my mind: Which is the perfect balance between even strokes and phrasing? I start to practice it with phrases with climax points in the accents but I don't like it much. Paco Cherro comes to my mind.³⁶ He told me in a lesson "When you find it is too much or too less expressive, do it with many phrasings and expressive, in an exaggeratedly way. Then, forget it and play flat. The idea of the phrasing will be still in your mind and you will get the point you are looking forward but in a better point of balance". So I did it and I liked that way. So I played it flat, but with the idea of the phrasing in my mind so I make some direction to the accents but not exaggerated and the strokes continued to sound even.

Then I worked in the first 2 bars and I found the problem that the sixteenth notes didn't sound even. So I repeated this to make the tempo more stable. I thought about the movement I did for the sixteenth-notes and I thought in making it more fluent, thinking in down-up movement when it is two sixteenth-notes and down-full-up when it is three.

In percussion, we can divide the type of strokes because of their movement in 4: Up, down, full and tap. Up is a movement that starts with the stick close to the hitting point and goes up. Down is a movement that starts with the stick up and finish the movement hitting the instrument and staying close to the instrument. Full is a movement that starts up, hits the instrument and goes up to the same position (natural movement) and tap is the same as full but in a shorter distance.

I also considered in making natural movements for the accented notes with the left hand. I realised that I rushed in some parts so I continued practicing with the metronome for some days.

Then, I had repertory class with Roger Carlson. He told me to phrase it more. Also, he told me that at the end of the movement I should finish with a tiny *ritardando*. In

³⁶ Freelance and one of my private teachers in Alicante

the week after I played this excerpt with the orchestra I played this *ritardando* in the rehearsal, but the conductor didn't like it and he wanted me to do it straight in time. Fredrik Björlin advised me to not go further in the head to make the *piano* strokes (we used to play the loud strokes close to the centre of the head and as softer as it gets, as closer to the edge we play it) in the last 3 strokes at the end of the first phrase and also the end of the last phrase, because as it is a solo, you can hear the different tunings between every stroke. So he advised me to play the last 3 strokes in the same part but doing smaller movement when it goes softer, so then you can hear the same pitch but in a softer dynamic.

In the rehearsals with *University of Gothenburg Symphonic Orchestra*, with Petri Sakari, I got some advices from the conductor, too. He wanted a deep sound but with less resonance so I dried it a bit with a little damper. He told me that at the end of the movement I should play it as *piano* as possible. So I tried to play as soft as I can the last stroke, but one day I got 2 strokes instead of only 1 because of trying to playing too soft. So I try not to get softer too early so then I can do the *diminuendo* without many risks. That part is alone so you can get nervous and have the risk that the stick hits 2 times instead of one.

2.2. EXCERPTS FOR TAMBOURINE

2.2.1. FOUR SEA INTERLUDES (rehearsal figure 10), by Benjamin Britten (1945)



Music example 12. Tambourine part from B. Britten, *Four Sea Interludes*, Rehearsal figure 10.

Look at video number 4 to see my performance of this excerpt.

Four Sea Interludes is a part of *Peter Grimes* Opera but it was published separately and it is usually performed separately as an orchestral suite. It has four parts and this excerpt is during the last part, *The Storm*.

I listened this excerpt in a couple of recordings.³⁷ I listened that the tambourine does a similar rhythmical motive with the wood winds while the strings play a melody of long notes.

I found some problems in this excerpt. The first is the volume. It is from *ppp* to *p*, so it must be very soft and clear. The tambourine that you are using here is very important. I couldn't do it properly with my tambourine because it is very "noisy" to my taste. So I used a Black Swamp with a felt in the inside part that makes it more soft and it helps. Also, it is because it is another brand of tambourine (mine is Grover and the one I used later is Black Swamp) that is more dampened.

About how to hold the tambourine: I practiced first times with it flat. I just waited until my lesson with Fredrik to know how to hold it to make this excerpt soft and clear, and to be able to phrase it well.

I first practiced on my tambourine. I put some wax on it to make the rolls sound better.³⁸ It is an excerpt full of finger rolls. Playing tambourine, there are two types of

³⁷ B. Britten, *Four Sea Interludes*, Chandos Records, CHAN 8473, 1986.

B. Britten *Four Sea Interludes*. London Symphony Orchestra. EMI Records, 7243 562615 2 5, 1990.

³⁸ It is necessary to put special wax in the tambourine. I use the brand Grover and it is a small piece that I spread in the part of the tambourine where I am going to slide my finger. That makes resistance to the finger so the jingles can sound.

roll: Shaking roll and finger roll. Shaking roll consists in make the jingles sound by rotating the wrist while holding the tambourine. Finger roll consist in to rub the middle finger around the tambourine head. To rub it with an even motion, we use to put wax on the head.

Another big problem of the piece was how to do *crescendo-diminuendo* roll in *ppp* with the finger. I thought in doing more pressure with the finger or do the roll faster to do the *crescendo* and then slower to do the *diminuendo* or maybe a combination of both solutions.

I found it easier to play without looking at the part and concentrating in the tambourine so I memorised the excerpt. They were 2 “motives” so I think in a combination of both. So I could memorise 2 motives as: 1-1-2-1-1-2-1-2-2-1-2-1-1- and a variation.

Music example 13. Tambourine part from Benjamin Britten, *Four Sea interludes*, rehearsal figure 10. Schema that I used for memorising.

Fredrik B. helped me to solve the problem with the tambourine position. I did it the way he suggested, that is holding it with the left wrist in one point and in the right leg in other point. Then, the jingles can sound clearly.



Picture example 1. Posture of how I hold the tambourine to play this excerpt.

He also suggested me that the rolls I do with the right hand's finger, I should finish them with the left hand's finger. Then, the phrasing would be better.

I played this excerpt in the Mock audition for Roger C. and Hans H. They suggested doing more *crescendo* and *diminuendo* in the rolls and to start the *crescendo* just as fast as possible to have enough time to make both *crescendo* and *diminuendo*.

2.2.2. CARNIVAL OVERTURE, by Antonín Dvorak (1891)

Two excerpts for tambourine from this piece are often asked for percussion auditions. Here I discuss both.

The Carnival overture is part of a *Nature, Life and Love* trilogy of overtures written by Dvořák, forming the second "Life" part. The other two parts of the trilogy are *In Nature's Realm*, Op. 91 ("Nature") and *Otello*, Op. 93 ("Love").

First excerpt

Music example 14. Tambourine part of *Carnival Overture* by A. Dvorak. The excerpt goes from the beginning until 5 bars before B

Look at video number 5a to see a video recording of this excerpt.

First, I listened to some recording.³⁹ The tambourine plays in the percussion section together with the timpani. Here, the tambourine have the role of the playing the rhythm of the melody that is played by the strings.

I saw the following problems:

- 1) Make notes even with a fast tempo.
- 2) Beating rolls

I practiced to make the notes even but I put a bit of accent in the half note of the first bar, because it is a long note and it helps to have a more long-lasting sound and it also gives a more festive character. Tim Genis has this comment moreover gives some indications that I share with him about the direction of the music.⁴⁰ He

³⁹ B.Britten. *Four Sea Interludes*. London Symphony Orchestra. EMI Records, 7243 562615 2 5, 1990.

⁴⁰ Genis, *Symphonic repertoire for percussion accessories*, 10.

recommends having a direction in bars 3 and 4 until the roll, and have a “push” in the rolls in bars 5 and 6. He also suggests to set the pulse well in those bars and to give a direction in bar 7 to 8. I agree with him on this as it gives a musical character to this excerpt, according with the music of the rest of the orchestra in that part.

I started to practice rolls by doing rolls very slow (half or third of the normal roll fastness). A good exercise I learnt in a master class in Spain is that it should sound like a triplet, so both movements (turn to the right-turn to the left with the wrist) are equal and the roll will sound even after this work.

Roger C. told me to play rolls as finger rolls. With the tambourine I am using I needed to lick my finger to make the roll with a better sound quality without little pauses in between the roll. An example of the difference between both rolls is in video number 5c.

To do this bar 4 he told me to play with an accent in the roll and to play the fourth note hitting the tambourine in the knee.

He also advised me to not separate much the tambourine from the knee.

The feedback I got put even more accent in these rolls. Fredrik Björilin told me that he would prefer to do shaking roll as this part is a “solo” for tambourine and I should show me to the jury by playing with the tambourine in a high position. Look at video 5 c to see both options of rolls in bars 3-5.

Also, he recommended to do more exercises to practice the shaking roll as for example, to do 30 seconds very slow, then 20 seconds faster and 10 seconds normal fastness, and repeat this 3 times, that is 3 minutes. He thought that it is enough per day as the body becomes very tense and muscular problems could appear.

In a note, Cirone and Sinai suggest doing a *crescendo* 2 bars before A.⁴¹ I agree as it makes a direction to the new section.

⁴¹ Cirone and Sinai, *The logic*, 122

Second excerpt

Music example 15. Tambourine part of *Carnival Overture* by A. Dvorak. Excerpt from 8 bars before W “to the end.

Look at video number 5b to see a performance of this excerpt by me.

This excerpt is at the end of the piece. It supports the melody’s rhythm and it brings out a festive atmosphere.

I played the second eight-note of these motives from bar 8 after W with the part just up of the knee. I play triplets with the fingers “normally”. Roger C. told me to play triplets moving in the tambourine, putting a little accent in the first note of the triplet. From bars 18 to 21 I played the eight notes with the fingers and the quarter note with the knee. It is important to make an even sound between both strokes. Cirone and Sinai suggest playing it with the knee and the hand and quarter notes and triplets only with the hand, as I thought.⁴²

About the last 2 notes Roger C. told me to play the last one with the knuckles but Fredrik B. explained that he prefers to play both accents the same way as both are secco and with accent. I prefer to make a difference with the last one as it shows much energy for the last stroke of the overture.

⁴² Cirone and Sinai, *The Logic*, 123

2.3. EXCERPTS FOR XYLOPHONE

2.3.1. FIREBIRD (L'Oiseau de Feu), by I. Stravinsky, 1909

This excerpt is one of the most common ones when you go to an audition. I have played it 3 times in auditions and also, in one recording for applying to an audition. The last time I played it was for a recording-audition and for Mock Audition at school.

Firebird is a Russian folk stories' ballet about a shining magic bird, Ivan and their adventures inside the castle of King Katschei. It consists in 2 excerpts. The first one is from rehearsal figure 47 (upbeat of bar before included) until rehearsal figure 48, and the second one starts in rehearsal figure 127 until the first beat of rehearsal figure 133. The xylophone imitates the flying bird.

The first excerpt is at the end of the movement *Supplication de l'oiseau de Feu*. It is a rhythmical game between xylophone with one motive, wood winds with another motive and strings with a different one. It must be very clear this excerpt but also play it musically.

The second excerpt occurs during the *Danse de la suite de Katschei enchantée par l'oiseau de feu*. Here, the xylophone has a more soloist role and share parts of the melody with strings and woodwinds.

L'Oiseau de Feu
Ballet

53

Tableau: Supplications de l'Oiseau de Feu
Meno mosso $\text{♩} = 54$

Igor Stravinsky
1909

Danse de la Suite de Kastchei Enchantée par l'Oiseau de Feu
Allegro $\text{♩} = 152$

Music example 16. Xylophone excerpts of *L'Oiseau de Feu*, by I. Stravinsky. Supplications de L'Oiseau de Feu, rehearsal figure 47 with upbeat. Danse de la Suite de Kastchei Enchantée par l'Oiseau de Feu, from rehearsal figure 127 until the first beat of rehearsal figure 133⁴³

Look at video number 6 to see my performance of these excerpts of Firebird.

⁴³ Gschwendtner and Ulrich, *Probespiel*, 53

COMMON THINGS FOR BOTH PARTS:

- Mallets should be very hard plastic or wood.



Picture example 2. Wood xylophone stick. Mike Balter brand.



Picture example 3. Hard plastic xylophone stick. Bob Becker model, Malletch brand.

- As an inspiration, the xylophone might be the ghoulish rattling of a skeleton's bones.

FIRST EXCERPT:

This first part is the slow one and it is around eight note 90.

I thought that one of the difficult aspects of this excerpt is to make the slurs. In the xylophone you can do this by playing the first note louder than the second one. So I did the first note with a down movement and the second one like a tap movement. So I do differences between the ones that have slur and the ones that don't have. The slurs are linking 2 notes except one time that there are 4 notes in the same slur so I try to do them in an expressively way, with a bit of *crescendo* and then *diminuendo*.

Another difficult aspect was to keep the tempo. This is a slow excerpt but it should be also in perfect tempo. I could make it using much metronome and trying to play the notes even, subdividing in thirty-second notes.

SECOND EXCERPT:

I found this second excerpt more difficult than the first one. Many things must be considered, as keeping the tempo in the pauses, jumps with the left hand, dynamic contrasts, musicality...

The tempo is *allegro*. Some people do it faster than it is indicated in the part. It should be around fourth note 120. I practiced it dividing it in parts:

- From rehearsal figure 127 to the end of rehearsal figure 128:

Before starting it is very important to establish the tempo mentally to avoid rushing or starting too fast.

It starts *piano*, so it should be really very soft so then I can create a contrast with the *fortissimo* at the end of the excerpt. I tried to make the 5 notes even, without accent on the first or on the last note (both of them are very commonly played like that).

In the long pauses, I concentrated in keeping the tempo as long pauses are common places to lose the tempo.

I found some inspiring information from Bonaccio about bar 127.⁴⁴ He writes:

127- Think light. "Birds chirping. But not happy chirping." Play off the bar.
127 - Think *Sul Ponticello* kind of tone 1/2 between node and centre until *mf* at 129
127 - Take the tempo of the English Horn solo, it's faster than you think
127 - Stay metronomically precise and **consistent**. Think 16th's
127 - Slight *diminuendo* from the first beat. Emphasis on the **front** of the phrase".⁴⁵

After the first bar it is *mezzopiano* and the schema is repeating 4 times more in different notes. Then in the fifth bar after 126, the schema is different and it is a jump down of a fifth interval. I found it difficult to make the *f#* with an even sound because it is played with left hand two bars before 129 it can be considered a continuation of the last schema. Although it is still *mp* I used to play it slightly more soft to make a difference and contrast to bar 129 where it starts *mf*.

About the phrasing, I found some ideas by David Valdés: "My phrasing idea until the "storm" of sixteenth starts (four bars before 130) is as follows: A little weight on the first note, get all notes from that initial energy, and taper down at the end".⁴⁶ I don't agree totally with him as it could wipe out the character of lightness and even sound. It is also a risk to play the second note softer so I would concentrate more in making all the notes even instead of giving weight to the first note.

Another curiosity that I found in this blog was about the sticking. David Valdés says that four bars before 130 "I change the logical sticking and I start with my left hand to play the fourth interval between D and A with my strong hand (right one)".⁴⁷ I found this interesting but I didn't find such a challenge in learning a fourth interval with the left hand. The right hand can still work as a metronome staying in one note to make the tempo even.

The fifth and sixth bars after 129 are one of the parts where I needed to practice more because of the jumps with the left hand. Because I am right-handed I need to practice this jump as it goes fast and sometimes I hit other bars. I spent some time in playing the notes with jumps even, finding an even sound in every note. To practice this, I invented different exercises, like: 1) Play only with the left hand and concentrate in the jump, how it should be, with a good and natural movement from

⁴⁴ Bonaccio. NB Percussion, *Firebird*

⁴⁵ NB Percussion, *Firebird*

⁴⁶ Valdes, *Firebird*.

⁴⁷ Valdés, *Firebird*

one bar to another one, memorising muscularly the distance so that I afterwards can do it to in a “subconscious” way. 2) The two hands play together at the same time. In this case, the right hand plays Eb throughout and at the same time, the left hand alternate between D and A. 3) Then I did the exercise number 2 but mixing it with the real part, like: 4 bars exercise number 2 and then 4 bars the real bars, repeating it many times.

I did this kind of exercises with many parts of the excerpt.

In rehearsal figure 130 it starts *forte*. The first bar is an alternating motive between g# and e in eight notes and I try to do them even, without accent on the first note. The next 2 bars have again jumps with the left hand so I did the same kind of exercises that I did before (number 1, number 2...). Nick Bonaccio shares these notes about this bar:

“130 - Think big beats.

130 - *Forte* in the centre of the bars. Stay in the centres.

130 - Add an accent on beat 1”.⁴⁸

I agreed in thinking big and *forte* but I didn’t agree on adding the accent. Why to add an accent on beat 1 if it is not written in the part?

Then it comes a “risky” bar with many jumps. I did the same kind of exercises that I mentioned before, but also I practiced it very slow. I did a kind of “mechanical” exercises: I repeated the same bar repeatedly and I did series of 10 times. If I fail one note, I start playing it repeatedly until I have played it 10 times totally correct. It helps me to do it perfect without mistakes, and when I have done this exercise a lot, I have less percentage of wrong notes. I also played it with metronome, to not forget that it must be well measured and to try to do each note with an even and a good quality sound.

Also, another risky bar is the sixth after rehearsal figure 130. Again it has a jump with left hand to a G at the end. I found it a “strange” bar as it repeats C# 5 times and I find it a quite irregular bar, but I work on it in a similarly way.

On rehearsal figure 131, the first 4 bars can be considered as a roll or a long note. It is sixteenth notes measured alternating D# and B. Listening to the orchestral part,⁴⁹ I figured out that in this part the xylophone part is less interesting as other things are happening in the orchestra, so I started *forte*, but then did *diminuendo* and then in the fourth bar, I did *crescendo* again until the same *forte* I had before. I found these 4 bars difficult because of 2 things: 1) to not lose tempo or rush. I must make every note even, so I worked a lot with metronome. Also, sometimes it was hard to keep every note well measured with the dynamic changes so I practiced the *crescendo* and *diminuendo* with metronome. 2) To make both hands even. I had some lessons

⁴⁸ Bonaccio, *Firebird*

⁴⁹ I.Stravinsky. *The firebird (and others)*. The Cleveland Orchestra, conducted by Piere Boulez. Deutsche Grammophon, 0289 479 0005 4, 2012.

about it and my teachers figured out that my right hand was playing louder than my left hand.

The other 4 bars of 131 are one of the most difficult parts for me, as well as the fifth bar of rehearsal figure 129 or fourth bar of rehearsal figure 130. These 4 bars have the same schema and same jumps with the left hand of a fifth interval, but each bar starts in a different note, so the right hand also does jumps of fourth down and then fifth up. Here the difficult thing I found was to play correct notes with all these jumps and this often happens, because it is fast and I (and other right-handed) have less control with the left hand. So I did again the exercises I talked about before. It helps a lot to find the correct point for beating and the muscles learn where they must go.

In rehearsal figure 132 it is *forte possibile* but it is the same schema as the first bars of rehearsal figure 131, but this time at the end I did a bigger *crescendo* to *fortissimo*. In the fifth bar of rehearsal figure 132 I arrived at *fortissimo* and it was often performed there also an *accelerando* until the end of the excerpt, where a new part of the piece starts. These last 4 bars of the excerpt also have the same schema of “kind of trill”, that reminds me of a bird. I usually play the first of the 3 notes louder with a small accent, because it sounds more like a bird. I practice this part slow.

The jump to the first beat of 133 was also risky, as it is a big interval (seventh) and it is the end of the *accelerando*, so it is in really fast tempo. I practiced a lot from the last trill to the A in the first beat of 133, slow and then faster.

I liked to record myself, especially to check all these difficulties. I could realise in my recording that I was rushing in the pauses and that I usually have 1 or 2 notes wrong in the whole excerpt in the risky parts I mentioned before. It is difficult to play it through perfect, even after all this hard work, there are usually some wrong notes. To solve this, I thought it can help do the exercises repeatedly. Also, to play it slow one bar each time, repeating the same bar like a machine and be very critical with yourself, or doing this kind of games that I describe above, like if you have a mistake, you start again counting 10 or 20 times to do them without mistakes.

it even until 90s in Russia), the base starts in G and the player is positioned towards the instrument facing the bigger bars.



Picture example 4. Picture of a man playing old kind of xylophone, the one that it is supposed it was used for first performances of Shostakovich pieces.

It is played with some sticks made by some animal bone. Nowadays we must deal with this difficult excerpt and the “standard” xylophone.

I listened to a couple of recordings to have an idea of the kind of music it is.⁵¹

The whole excerpt is in *fff* so I chose very hard sticks of plastic head.

I realised that in the first 5 bars and a half, the left hand just play the same note always, a C, and the right hand plays the melody and a low D of accompaniment. In the last 3 bars and a half the left hand plays other notes but always in the same roll of accompaniment.

I put the left arm in a 90° angle in the elbow to make space for the jumping right arm.

First I started practicing the melody with the right hand. Then I practiced the jumps (a twelfth down, then an eleventh up, etc) very slow to understand the movements.

This excerpt is the kind of excerpt that needs much slow work to can play after the correct notes in a fast tempo. So I did some exercise for the right hand jumps, repeating them repeatedly in different tempi. Here there are some examples:

⁵¹D. Shostakovich. *Second Cello Concerto*. Deutsche Grammophon, 0289 445 8212 3, 1994.
D. Shostakovich, *Second cello Concerto*. Malmö Symphonic Orchestra, conducted by James DePriest. Gramnophon, CD 626, 1994.



Music example 18. Exercise I created to work in the jumps of first bar of rehearsal figure 100, in *Second Cello Concerto*, by Shostakovich.

Look at video number 7b to see the performance of this technical exercise.



Music example 19. Exercise I create to work jumps with the static left hand in the C. Then I work in the arms position, to make the jumps without sticks-crashes or crosses.

Roger C. told me to make the melody more and to do more *ritardando* in the first 3 notes moreover to make more contrast between melody and accompaniment.

Fredrik B. told me that I was concentrating on making the melody. He told me that it was good but I could even do more contrast. He also remarked that I should continue doing slow exercises created in slow tempi and then faster, since there were wrong notes. This is a slow work. He told me that I did 95% of the work and it took me some time, and the same amount of time or more will be needed to fix the last 5% to make it correct, so I continue practicing these exercises usually.

2.4. EXCERPTS FOR GLOCKENSPIEL

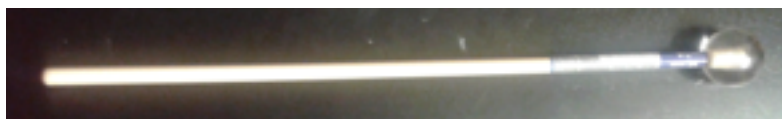
2.4.1. LA MER, by Claude Debussy. Movement 2. Jeux de vagues (1905)

This excerpt was originally composed for “Jeu de timbres”. This is a keyboard glockenspiel. Since the instrument is not used nowadays, we play this excerpt on the standard glockenspiel.⁵²

Holland says that Debussy in *La Mer* wrote for keyed glockenspiel and these parts were expected to be played by a keyboard player, not a percussionist: “My first principal conductor with the *London Symphonic Orchestra* was Pierre Monteaux who had worked closely with Debussy: he had the glockenspiel part of *La Mer* split between conventional and keyboard glockenspiel. However, <<...>> many of these parts are now played in the percussion section on the conventional instrument”⁵³.

First of all, I listen to the music.⁵⁴ My part starts just in the beginning of this second movement. I wrote down the tempi they played in this recording to practice later with metronome. I practiced the first bars until rehearsal figure 16 in eight note = 200, and then I practiced after eight note= 160. Here, I see that the glockenspiel has a colouring role, redundant in this movement.

I used my sticks of methacrylate material,⁵⁵ as all is in a soft dynamic and it can give the special sound of impressionism.



Picture example 5. Methacrylate glockenspiel mallets. Iñaki Sebastián brand.

Sinai, who worked this piece with Pierre Monteux (an expert in French repertoire), suggest playing with both hard and soft mallets in this excerpt, but he doesn't specify which material to use.⁵⁶

⁵² Anthony Cirone and Joe Sinai, *The logic of it all*, 130.

⁵³ Holland, *A Guide to the Instruments*

⁵⁴ C. Debussy, *Debussy*, EMI classics, 7243 5 56520 2 7, 1992,

⁵⁵ Methacrylate: Kind of plastic material transparent and resistant. It is also known by the initials PMMA. www.wikipedia.es

⁵⁶ Cirone and Sinai, *The logic*, 130.

I divided the music in the different motives that appear:

- 1) Bars 2 to 4
- 2) bars 10 to 13
- 3) bars 14 to 17
- 4) bars 20 to 23
- 5) bars 26 to 27
- 6) bars 28 to 31
- 7) Rehearsal figure 21
- 8) Second bar of rehearsal figure 23

(4)

LA MER

Trois esquisses symphoniques pour orchestre

CLAUDE DEBUSSY

GLOCKENSPIEL ou CÉLESTA

N° 1... De l'aube à midi sur la mer: TACET

N° 2... Jeux de vagues

Allegro (dans un rythme très souple)

16 Animé
Cor ang.

GLOCK.

17

18

19 Assez animé

20 2^{ds} vous

21 GLOCK.

Océdez un peu

22 au Mouvt

Cédez 1^{ers} vous

23

GLOCK.

24

25 au Mouvt
p^{te} p^l.

A. Durand & Fils. Éditeurs.

D. 4 F. 6531

Paris, 4, Place de la Madeleine.

Music example 20. Glockenspiel part from C. Debussy, *La Mer* (1905). Movement 2. Bars from the beginning until second bar of rehearsal figure 23.

1) I found the following problems:

- Making both strokes even.
- Finding the tempo properly as it is just the second bar of the beginning and it can be a bit tricky with the first bar.



Music Example 21. Glockenspiel part from C. Debussy, *La Mer*. Movement 2. Bars from 1 to 4.

Sinai thought to sustain the notes despite the *staccato*.⁵⁷ I don't agree as I think it should be played *staccato* and in an instrument as the glockenspiel it will sound anyway with a sharp volume even doing the articulation of *staccato*.

2) Here the tempo and time signature change, from $\frac{3}{4}$ to $\frac{3}{8}$ and it gets faster.

Now I have 2 bars the same rhythm and notes, but one in *pp* and another in *p*. I checked the rhythm slowly as it can be a bit tricky. Both are also with *legato* slurs. In this kind of music (romanticism and later), the best part of composers indicate well in the percussion part the articulation (slurs, etc) and instructions of using different sticks, etc.

3) Here it is two groups of 2 eighth notes. It repeats the same after without *crescendo*, but I think that it should also be played with *crescendo* the second time when I listened to the music and saw that it is the same *crescendo*, moreover because asking Fredrik Björlin. There are *legato* slurs each second note so I did this articulation, playing the first note slightly more *forte*.

4) Here it is a triplet motive. It is important to make the difference between them, because the first and the second ones are in *pp* but the third has a hairpin of *crescendo*.

Sinai suggested to change to softer mallets or play softer with the sticks from before.⁵⁸ I agree with this as it is a change of character. To me, now the music is imitating waves.

5) This is some part with sixteenth notes with melody (last parts were just rhythms with 2 notes). All notes have *staccato* so I try to make the differences playing them different as the ones before. I decided to play single strokes. This part goes in

⁵⁷ Cirone and Sinai, *The logic*, 130.

⁵⁸ Cirone and Sinai, *The logic*, 130-131

crescendo to the next phrase, where I have some triplets rhythms. I had the feedback to play it more beautiful, more melodic.

6) I made difference between both motives in this part as the second is dampened as it can disturb the music that follows it. They are 6 notes and the two first are *legato* and the other 4 *staccato*. I tried to make the differences between both. It is fast part with “jumps” so I practiced it slow first, and then more fast. Here I had the feed back from the Mock audition of keep the energy in the pauses.

7) This is 8 bars repeating the same motive. The problems I find here is the *diminuendo* and the sticking. I did the sticking R-L-R-L but after having a lesson with Fredrik Björlin, he suggested me to play it better R-R-L-L as it is more easy and it can be faster and I also can feel more confident playing right notes (last part of this excerpt's part was more risky because of jumps). The tricky part is to do it all *legato* as it has some jumps so I must practice on this to make all strokes even and in *diminuendo*. It is p, so the volume part doesn't help to do it because the movements are shorter. Also, I tried to make the 8 bars sounding the same. From the third bar it says “cedez un peu” so I tried to get the tempo a bit slower there.

8) At the end I had a last stroke with grace note. It is not a typical percussion grace note (very close to the real one and playing it before the beat) so I tried to do it with both notes sounding even. Fredrik Björlin told me to do it this way and I also could realise it after listening it in the recordings.

2.4.2 APRENTICE DU SORTIER, by Paul Dukas (1897)

Vif ♩ = 126 (rythmé ternaire) Paul Dukas
1897

p et détaché

cresc. *f*

rfz *rfz* *più f*

sempre cresc.

Music example 22. Glockenspiel part from Paul Dukas, *Apprentice du sortier* (1897). Excerpt from fourth bar after rehearsal figure 17 until third bar after rehearsal figure 19.⁵⁹

⁵⁹ Gschwendtner and Ulrich, *Probespiel*, 58

22 *Allegro*
ff

24

26 *Scherzando*
p

40 *Toujours plus animé*
piu f

52
ff

Music example 23. Glockenspiel part from Paul Dukas, *Apprentice du sortier* (1897). Rehearsal figures 22 to 24, Rehearsal figure 26, 40 and 52.⁶⁰

⁶⁰ Gschwendtner and Ulrich, *Probespiel*, 58

Blades said that "the florid writing in *The Sorcerer's Apprentice* (Dukas) was at one time generally considered to be *a job for the keyboard*".⁶¹ It means that it is pianistically written maybe to be performed with a celesta so it makes it more difficult to the percussionist as we have 2 or 4 mallets instead of 10 fingers. I think that it is so risky because of the jumps, fastness and articulation.

First of all, I listened to some recordings and I chose sticks. For the first part of the excerpt I think I will use the Tom Freer white sticks as they can be soft but also have a nice sound playing loud.⁶² I think it is important to start this excerpt really soft and then make contrast in the last bars of the first part of the excerpt.



Picture example 6. Poly xylophone mallet. K12 model, Freer brand.

When I could play all this correctly, I concentrated in the first two lines. I kept in mind all the articulation, and to play exactly what it is written.

Then I thought about the sticking. The most important about this is to choose a good sticking for the phrasing and I used the sticking I learnt during my bachelor as I thought it works well. The sticking would be the following:

Music example 24. Glockenspiel part from P. Dukas, *Apprentice du Sortier* (1897), from fourth bar after figure 17 until fifteenth bar after rehearsal figure 17. It is added the sticking that I use.

Then I took care of playing the accents. The notes with grace note at the beginning of the excerpt always have accents so it is easier to remember.

Then I concentrated in the next 2 lines. I chose the following sticking for this part:

⁶¹ BLADES, *Percussion Instruments*, 399

⁶² P. Dukás. *Apprentice du Sortier*. Berliner Philharmonie, conducted by Simon Preston, 0289 419 6172 3, 1987.

P. Dukás. *Apprentice du Sortier*. Basler Symphonie Orchester. Erato, 2292-54819-2, 1984.

Music example 25. Glockenspiel part from P. Dukas, *Apprentice du Sortier* (1897), from rehearsal figure 18 until the fourth bar after rehearsal figure 19. It is added the sticking that I use.

While practicing this part, I thought that I will definitely use this plastic sticks or something similar, because the sounds is shiny and it also made the double strokes in the last bars easier.

I made these decisions and then I started to get deeper into it. I concentrated in the first 8 bars. I tried to play the notes in the first 3 bars that have *staccato* marks very short to emphasise the difference between them and the notes with accents. I put on the metronome to practice keeping the tempo and making the eight-notes even. I tried to play this very soft and then make a contrast with the *crescendo* until the *fortissimo*. I had the tendency to start the *crescendo* before it is supposed to start so then I corrected this, too.

When I could play all this articulation, I started to do slow exercises to fix the muscular movements and play without mistakes. I specially needed to practice the double strokes at the end of this excerpt, in the sixteenth-notes. I practiced them slow, hand-by-hand and then faster.

About the second part of the excerpt, I just practiced it slow, hand-by-hand. I did the following sticking:

Music example 26. Glockenspiel part from P. Dukas, *Apprentice du Sortier* (1897), rehearsal figure 22. It is added the sticking that I use.

I found some exercises by Lee Vinson's website.⁶³ In the first exercises he concentrates in the sticking that is a paradiddle. I don't agree much in practice exercises 2 and 3 because it is the sticking and rhythm but in other intervals. I find it already difficult to learn muscularly in each bar the different intervals so I don't find the point in learning shorter intervals. Here I would include some exercises of slow motion between the intervals and with separated hands like the exercises he proposes at the end of this page. I liked his idea of simplifying each bar to practice slowly and concentrate in the movements.

Fredrik B. told me that I should start more soft and work more on the articulation as it wasn't enough clear, especially the accents. He did different sticking at the end, as he played the sixteenth-notes single. I needed to think about how to do this again, because maybe it is a better option to play them with singles strokes instead of double strokes. The advantage is that the notes sound more even but disadvantage is that it is easier to play mistakes as it is very fast.

⁶³ W. Lee Vinson. *Sorcerer's Apprentice exercises*. <http://leevinson.com/sorcerers%20exercises.pdf>

2.4.3 PINES OF ROME, by Respighi (1924)

The image displays a musical score for the Glockenspiel part of the first movement of 'Pines of Rome' by Ottorino Respighi. The tempo is marked 'Allegretto vivace'. The score is written in 3/4 time and begins with a dynamic marking of *ff*. The notation includes various rhythmic patterns, including eighth and sixteenth notes, and rests. There are several rehearsal marks: a square bracket at the beginning, a square box containing the number 1, a square box containing the number 2, and a square box containing the number 4. The score also features dynamic markings such as *mf cresc.* and *f*. The piece concludes with a final *ff* marking. The score is presented in a single system with five staves.

Music example 27. Glockenspiel part from O. Respighi, *Pines of Rome* (1924). From the beginning until eleventh bar after rehearsal figure 4.

As an inspiration, just to say that this first movement portrays children playing by the pine trees in the Villa Borghese gardens. The great Villa Borghese is a monument to

the patronage of the Borghese family, who dominated the city in the early seventeenth century. It is a sunny morning and the children sing nursery rhymes and play soldiers. Here the glockenspiel tries to imitate the jumping water in the fountains. In the percussion section, Respighi combines the glockenspiel with triangle and rattle. Playing here glockenspiel, it is important to listen to the woodwinds as they are playing very rhythmical here. Blades said that it was pianistically written and he compares it with the Magic Flute glockenspiel excerpt.⁶⁴

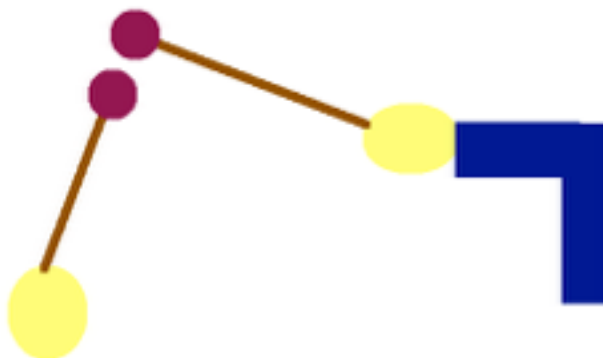
I divided the excerpts by parts and I worked on them separately.

First part: From the beginning until first bar of rehearsal figure 1.



Music example 28. Glockenspiel part of O. Respighi, *Pines of Rome* (1924). From the beginning until the first bar of rehearsal figure 1.

The first problem that appeared is that the sticks hit each other, so my solution for this was to hold the left hand straight but closer to me than the right hand, and right elbow bended out in 90° angle. The right hand must play more separated from me because of the Bb.



Picture example 7. Graphic example about the position of the hands and right elbow.

I also thought in this part phrases of 3 bars, like A-A-A' or B (where some notes are different and there is also a *crescendo*)

⁶⁴ BLADES, . *Percussion Instruments*, 399

Second part: 6 bar before rehearsal figure 2



Music example 29. Glockenspiel part from O. Respighi, *Pines of Rome*. Five bars before rehearsal figure 2.

About this part, I needed to listen to the recording about how these grace notes are played.⁶⁵ Usually in percussion the main note is played on the beat but sometimes, like in the excerpt for glockenspiel from *La Mer*, the beat can be on the grace note.

Third part

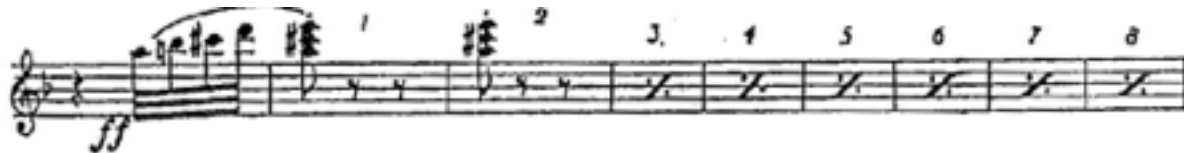
I concentrated in the articulation



Music example 30. Glockenspiel part from O. Respighi, *Pines of Rome* (1924). Bars 7-11 after rehearsal figure 2.

Fourth part

I concentrated in playing the thirty-seconds correctly and in tempo.



Music example 31. Glockenspiel part from O. Respighi, *Pines of Rome* (1924). Bars 12-20 after rehearsal figure 2.

⁶⁵ O. Respighi. *Pines of Rome*. Boston Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Seiji Ozawa. Deutsche Grammophon, 0289 415 8462 5, 1987.
O. Respighi. *Pines of Rome*. Cincinatti Symphony Orchestra, conducted by J. L. López-Cobos. Telarc, 80505, 1999.

Fifth part

The image shows a musical score for the Glockenspiel part of the fifth section of O. Respighi's *Pines of Rome*. The score is written on five staves. The tempo is marked as ♩ = 92 (Allegretto vivace). The key signature is one sharp (F#). The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, accents, and dynamic markings like *f* and *ff*. There are rehearsal marks: a circled '3' above the first staff and a circled '4' above the fourth staff. The first staff has fingerings 7, 8, and 2. The second staff has a '2' above it. The third staff has fingerings 1 through 9. The fourth staff has a '4' above it. The fifth staff has fingerings 1, 2, 3, and 4. The score ends with a double bar line and a repeat sign.

Music example 32. Glockenspiel part of O. Respighi, *Pines of Rome* (1924). Bars from third bar after rehearsal figure 3 until eleventh bar after rehearsal figure 4.

I tried different sticking here, and then I decided to start it with the right hand, as I had more agility with this hand and it plays more notes (3, and left hand 2).

After had worked on all these problems, Fredrik Björlin gave me the following tips:

First part

He suggested me to play it slower and to make it sound more mature. He also suggested that I record this part to check that I make it totally even as he noticed that I do the second and fourth sixteen-note (which creates a kind of “shuffle” rhythm) slightly later.

Third part

He told me that here I should maintain the tempo as I was changing it here. He told me some trick for this: Thinking in the typical *crescendo* in *Night on bald mountain* by M. Mussorgski, as this reminds him to that. He also suggested me to do more exaggerated the accents here.

He saw again that I was doing this thirty-seconds rhythmical uneven so he suggested to play it very slow with metronome and record myself so then I can notice easily if I am doing this rhythm, and check the recording after with the metronome. These thirty-seconds should be faster than how I played for him. He suggested also to starting them with left hand, so then left hand plays A-E. Also, he told me another

trick: To play the first cord only A-E without the C# as you can't notice even in an audition. He told me that many percussionists do this because it is really too hard to play the first cord with 3 notes as you come from a very fast part from before, and the effect is the same.

Fourth part

He suggested dampening the *forte* F to make the effect for the notes in *piano* after.

Fifth part

He suggested doing the *crescendo* more exaggerated.

About the changes of tempo, he suggested to make a contrast of the different tempi and then, about the "stringendo", show it in the eight-notes as it is where it is easier to show.

Also in rehearsal figure 9, he suggested to finish the tremolo earlier to not go down in the sixteen-notes.

I also recorded myself. I noticed about this rhythmically uneven parts that Fredrik told me by myself and I saw here the importance of recording myself, as I didn't notice before. It is very little difference, but if you check it with the metronome, it is obvious that the rhythm was not exactly perfect.

Then I recorded the first 3 bars, playing them repeatedly, and I saw this uneven rhythm. It is in tempo but because of this, it doesn't sound rhythmical. For this problem, I did some exercises: I put the metronome in eight-notes and I recorded myself repeatedly. Then I created exercises:

- 1) Playing only the right hand
- 2) Playing only the left hand
- 3) Combining playing one time the 3 bars with right hand, then with both hands together and repeat
- 4) The same of number 3 but with the left hand
- 5) Combine 3 and 4

3. EXCERPT FOR TIMPANI

2.5.1. MUSIC FOR STRINGS, PERCUSSION AND CELESTA, by Béla Bartók (1936) - 2 parts

In this piece Bartok uses 2 string orchestras with harp, piano and percussion. The percussion section is formed by timpani, bass drum, side drums, cymbals, tam-tam, xylophone. It is a piece with many characters and colours. It is a strange combination of instruments but he composed it commissioned for the tenth Anniversary of *Basel's Chamber Orchestra*.

First part (Movement 2, from bar 310 until 338)

I first looked by the music and I listen to some recordings simultaneously with looking in the part for the time where the excerpt starts within the music.⁶⁶ It starts after 11:18 in the movement. Then I saw in the score that the timpani must be tuned in an octave from F1 to F2. So I thought about which timpani would be best for it. First I thought about using 32" and 23" timpani as these timpani are the ones that have better quality sound in these notes, but then I figured out that they are so far away (when you play with 4 timpani, these used to be placed in the extremes) and it would be difficult to do the jumps. So I choose 29" and 26" ones, as they are closer to each other. It is also useful to tune also the F2 in the 23" as it is used in the next excerpt in the fourth movement because I didn't put 32" and 23" together as it is supposed if I play the whole piece I would need to play other notes and I would need to have the 4 timpani to be able to tune all the notes.

About why I chose these timpani: Each timpani has a register where the higher notes and the lower notes you can tune have not good quality, but it has good quality the fourth or fifth interval "in the middle". For example: It is good quality sound if you tune from F1 to B1 in 32", from G1 to C2 or D2 in 29", from B2 to E3 in 26" or from D3 to G3 in 23". The notes higher or lower than these range have less quality sound as the head of the timpani is or much tensed or much loose. It also depends of the quality of the timpani and the heads you are using. If you are using timpani in good shape, you can tune properly maybe a bit lower or higher notes too.

In this case, neither of the notes are in a good quality sound range but we subject it to play comfortably with nearer timpani to do this agile passage.

⁶⁶ B. Bartók. *The legendary Fritz Reiner-Chicago Symphony Orchestra. Concerto for orchestra*. RCA, 09026-61504-2, 1993.

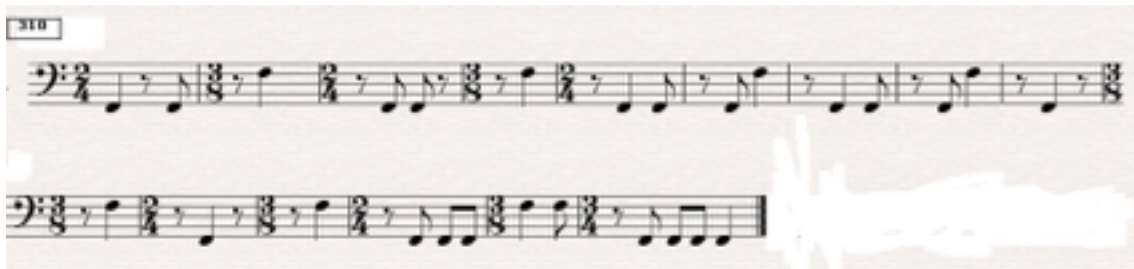
B. Bartók. *Concerto for orchestra. Music for strings, percussion and celesta*. Berliner Philharmonie. EMI classics, 72434 76397 2, 1974

B. Bartók. *Music for strings, percussion and celesta*. Oslo Philharmonic, conducted by Marriss Jansons. EMI Records Ltd. CDC 7 54070 2, 1990.

- 1) Tricky bar changing, from 3/8 to 2/4 best part of times (from rehearsal figure 310 to 325)
- 2) Reading the fast part with sixteenth notes (from third to seventh bar of rehearsal figure 330)
- 3) Glissando from F in 29" to A (eighth and ninth bars of rehearsal figure 330)

Then I tried to solve these problems:

1) Measuring: I subdivided all in eighth notes and measured it slowly and then faster. I thought in its structure and it helped me.



Music example 34. Timpani part from B. Bartok, *Music for Strings, Percussion and Celesta* (1936). Movement 2. Bars from 310 to 324).

I also made some schemas about it. It is easier to read and I could check when I read what the score says and with my schema if there was some difference.



Music Example 35. My schema for check the rhythm in a differently way.

I only did this to check if there are some rhythmical doubts but not for normal playing we must respect what the composer has written to do it in his musical way. If he wrote in this way is because some reason and it has its own feeling I think that it is important to respect it.

I created some exercises to solve this problem, as playing it with eighth notes in the fourth notes, dividing them in 2, so then I can feel where each note is correct.



Music example 36. Another schema for check the rhythmical tricky parts.

Problem 2:



Music example 37. Timpani part from B. Bartok, *Music for Strings, Percussion and Celesta* (1936). Movement 2. Bars from 332 to 336).

I tried to practice it with the recording but as it must be very rhythmical and it is in soft dynamic, I thought it is better to practice with metronome to solve the problems that I mentioned before. So I use the metronome around fourth note= 140. Then it will be around fourth note= 160. I did some schemas to practice, starting with the high note. So I made groups of sixteenth notes in this combination:

6 – 4 – 6 -6 – 8 – 12 - 4



Music example 38. My schema of how I organise the rhythm in this part.

Problem 3:

Blades commented that Bártók exploited the use of the glissandi compared with his predecessors and even his contemporaries. He told me also that his glissandi are well within the register of the timpani not as other composers who stretched the compass, and the drumhead, or used glissandi that couldn't fit in the register of one timpani⁶⁸.

⁶⁸ Blades, *Percussion Instruments*, 413.

In the timpani you can do the glissando beating the timpani when the glissando start and just after move the pedal up or down. It produces this curious effect. You can do glissando just beating the first note, or both notes, or do a roll from the first to the final one. In this case, we do a roll from the first to the final one.



Music example 39. Timpani part from B. Bartok, *Music for Strings, Percussion and Celesta* (1936). Movement 2. Bars from 337 and 338).

About how to tune the last note I must practice the third major interval from F to A and learn the distance with the pedal from both notes. I practiced it repeating the change many times until my body learned the distance by these movements with the foot and by listening to the A to be in perfect tune.

Then, I needed to look in the general score as I couldn't see clearly what the other instruments are playing and sometimes I couldn't figure out which rhythms they are playing. For example, at the beginning it helped me to listen to the piano part (that is written as help in the timpani part) to know where I should enter and to feel the character of the piece.

Some light dampers can be used to make this part more clear, especially in the fast parts. A damper can be a small piece of clothe. It makes a drier sound with fewer harmonics and that is good for when you are playing soft but rhythmical parts. Finally, in the mock audition I didn't use them and then I realised that I should have done it as the room was with much resonance and I should have had a drier sound.

Second part (movement 4, from bar 26 until 63)

My first impression is that it started as solo and in a fast tempo. It is very energetic, rhythmical, using hard sticks. It is not hard to read as the best part of the excerpt is the same bar repeating all the time. The first problem that appeared to me was the repeating bar. I tried to make all notes even. I chose 29" and 26" timpani for it, as they are closer to each other than if I had chosen non-consecutive ones and at the same time the notes used here have a good quality sound in these timpani (Ab1 and Db2). The notes are in the middle register of the timpani tuning, so they sound very good.

Music example 40. Timpani part of B. Bartok's *Music for string percussion and celesta* (1936), rehearsal figure 26.

I could see 2 parts in this excerpt: One is the fast part of eighth notes (from bar 26 until 44) and then it is a slower part with tuning changes (from bar 46 until 63).

At the first part, the first problem I found is the sticking.⁶⁹ It is not much recommendable to do double strokes in the timpani but here it is necessary because

⁶⁹ Sticking: It is the Word used in percussion that means if you use right hand or Left hand. It would be the same as bowing for string players or fingering for pianists.

of the fastness of the excerpts. It is necessary to be played as paradiddle: Right-Right-Left-Right // Left-left-right-left.⁷⁰ So each hand plays only in one timpani.



Music example 41. Timpani part from B. Bartok, *Music for Strings, Percussion and Celesta* (1936). Movement 4. Repeated bar, like bar 27. Paradiddle sticking.

I started it like: R-L-L-R instead of R-L-R-L, to make the start clearer.



Music example 42. Timpani part from B. Bartok, *Music for Strings, Percussion and Celesta* (1936). Movement 4. Bar 26. Suggested sticking by Hans Hernqvist.

I couldn't play now as fast as in the recording so I practiced it slow, trying to make all strokes even.

With time, I could play it faster. After repeating the same bar 14 times, there are 3 different bars like a variation. Here I played in the same way, but the first stroke of each bar with the opposite hand. Hans Hernqvist suggested this in our lesson.



Music example 11. Timpani part from B. Bartok, *Music for Strings, Percussion and Celesta* (1936). Movement 4. Bars from 40 to 44). Suggested sticking by Hans Hernqvist.

Working with the 2nd part of the excerpt, I found that tuning is a problem here for me. I needed to think where the best places (or one of them) are for changing the tuning. The fast part I tuned like this:

29" timpani: Ab, and 26" timpani: Db.

⁷⁰ Paradiddle: It is an American rudimento used by percussionists as technical motive that consists in combination of single alternated strokes (each one with a different hand) and a double stroke (two strokes with the same hand) that makes then singler sticking combination of "Right-Left-Right-Right / Left-Right-Left-Left)

Then, after 3 bars there are a short part with B# and E#. I decided to tune E# in the 23" timpani. I could tune it at the beginning of the excerpt. I changed Db to B# (a half tone). I did it just after the fast part.

Then I had a *fermata* and 1 bar playing Bb. I decided to change from B# to Bb in the fermata (one tone) in the same timpani (26").

Then I decided to change the tuning to the A just after the fast part in the 29". So after the fast part, I realised that I change in 29" to A, and in 26" to B#. The Eb I tune in the pause of 4 bars when I was playing just Bb.

The image shows a musical score for the timpani part from Bartok's *Music for Strings, Percussion and Celesta*. It consists of three staves of music. Above the staves, there are circles representing the tuning of three timpani. The top circle contains the notes A, B#, and E#. The middle circle contains the notes A, Bb, and Eb, with the Bb note highlighted in yellow. The bottom circle contains the note A. The musical notation includes notes, rests, and dynamic markings such as 'p' and 'ff'. The score is set in a key signature of one flat and a time signature of 2/4.

Music example 43. Timpani part from B. Bartok, *Music for Strings, Percussion and Celesta* (1936). Movement 4. Bars from 46 to 63). Schema of the tuning in each timpani. In yellow is the new note I must tune in that timpani.

4. END DISCUSSION

This thesis has helped me in many ways. It was a long process that has impregnated my way of practicing on the excerpts and has changed my vision of how to practice them. Since I started writing the diary of my daily practice, I noticed that I have become much more organised and I have practiced in a more effective way. I found the problems, separate them and I focus one by one. As I have written them in my diary, my learning becomes more conscious and I assimilate it better. To these problems, I find solutions more creatively: I create my own technique exercises or I try to find a solution by myself. This makes me more independent and less dependent on the teacher. I have developed a deeper knowledge of how to prepare percussion excerpts for auditions. I learnt from my own playing but I do not base this work only on that: I also compared my way of playing excerpts with other percussionists ways and I was open to change my way of playing an excerpt if I found another that brings me more advantages, so I keep investigating with each excerpt. I could say that this thesis is a “permanent work” for me as I have adapted this method to my daily practice.

There are many other excerpts I would like to have included if there was more time and I have not included in this thesis but they could be perfectly included as they are so common asked in auditions and therefore they are practiced a lot. In snare drum, I would like to have included *Romeo and Juliet*, by S. Prokofiev or *Sheherezade*, movements III and IV, by Rimsky-Korsakov. This last one is known because of different ways and ideas about how to play it. In tambourine, I could have included *Carmen* by G. Bizet or *España* by E. Chabrier as they are very common in auditions and both are very different from those that I have included. In xylophone I could have included other excerpts as *Porgy and Bess* by G. Gershwin, as this is maybe the most common asked in auditions, *Oiseaux Exotiques*, by O. Messiaen, because it is very different from the rest of excerpts and it is very interesting to play imitating birds, *Lady Macbeth* by D. Shostakovich, *The Young Person's Guide to the Orchestra* by B. Britten or *Colas Breugnon*, by D. Kabalevsky, for example. About glockenspiel, I would like to have included *Magic Flute* excerpt, by W.A. Mozart, as I have prepared it for three auditions. That means that it is very common. It is simple but it is difficult to show the musicality and the phrases. I also would like to have included *The Sleeping Beauty*, by P.I. Tchaikovsky as it is common in opera auditions and it is necessary the use of four mallets. I have not included excerpts of cymbals, vibraphone, bass drum that I would like too, as *fourth Symphony* or *Romeo and Juliet* by Tchaikovsky, *Night in the Bare Mountain*, by M. Mussorgsky or *Second Piano Concerto* by S. Rachmaninoff, as they are some of the most common in auditions moreover ones of the most challenging for percussionists. In vibraphone, the most common excerpt is *West Side Story “Cool”* by L. Bernstein, in which the most important aspect is to play it with “groove”. *Rite of Spring* in bass drum is interesting also because the many kinds of sounds you need to produce during the whole piece and because its famous fast and difficult excerpt at the end of first part.

This thesis makes a contribution of sharing knowledge about these common excerpts to other orchestral percussionists who also play these with a daily routine for

auditions. Here I show my way of working on the excerpts and hopefully it can be inspiring to other percussionists, as it was inspiring to me to research in blogs, method books or just asking to teachers and colleagues.

It is not only one way to play an excerpt, there are different ones which can be optimise depending of each one technique, acoustic, kind of instrument and others. I contribute with this work to an open discussion about the different ways of playing orchestral excerpts.

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