

CONTEMPORARY FIELD PERCUSSION:

ARRANGING FOR THE RHYTHM SECTION SOUND

by James B. Campbell

One of the most difficult arranging assignments is to write a marching percussion arrangement from music originally written for the drum set. This situation usually occurs when the arrangement is in the jazz, rock, or Latin idiom. When scoring for the outdoor percussion ensemble in these idioms, one must carefully study or listen to the entire rhythm section from the original music. Take into consideration individual contributions from the piano, bass, guitar, auxiliary percussion, and drum set. Also, become familiar with the overall feeling generated by this section of the band.

Much of the character of a modern jazz, rock, or Latin composition is constructed around a bass pattern. The bass rhythm will usually define the style and character of the arrangement.

Bass parts can have a simple influence in styles such as swing, commercial or even a ballad. Harmonic outline is usually emphasized with little melodic movement. Rhythms are kept simple, usually just down-beats.

In this simple style, the bass pattern:

BASS



... can be easily transferred to the bass drums:

4 BASS DRUMS



The bass drums duplicate the bass rhythm and add reinforcement with the implied harmonic movement.

Timpani can also be used to imitate a bass line:

BASS



TIMPANI



By using timpani in the above example, the bass drums can be saved for isolated accents or as a bass part in the next phrase. This gives the arrangement more variety.

To arrange a bass line that is melodic in character:



... "outline" its melodic contour:



Arrange a bass drum part to fit the shape of the phrase. The more drums you have, the better. However, the phrase can be effective with just a few drums.

3 BASS DRUMS



The melodic contouring of a phrase makes it possible to adapt any number of bass drums or multi-toms to reinforce that phrase.

Commercial rock and Latin music usually contain a repetitive bass line that is very rhythmic and melodic in nature:

BASS



The bass drum part should offer a basic rhythmic foundation for the marching group and provide an implied melodic reinforcement:

4 BASS DRUMS



In the contemporary jazz/rock ensemble the drummer has many jobs. He must:

- 1) Keep "time" for the band; integrating with them.
- 2) Support and "set-up" ensemble and solo rhythm patterns.
- 3) Sustain or create intensity through "fills" or solo breaks.

In the outdoor percussion ensemble the snare drum segment is usually used to play "time" through the use of "ride cymbal" patterns:



RH-CYMB, LH SNARE

If a cymbal is not available, the same pattern can be written for the drum alone:

SNARE



In some cases, it is possible to use the multi-toms to keep "time":

TIMP-TOM TRIO



"Time" patterns are not just limited to one voice. Voice-trading with other segments will expand the possibilities of a single pattern.

The marching percussion ensemble will usually set up and reinforce the important ensemble rhythms in the jazz/rock idiom. The density of the arrangement preceding the rhythm is thin. The support thickens with the ensemble entrance:

ENSEMBLE RHYTHM

Musical score for Ensemble Rhythm. It consists of four staves: SNARE, TRIO-TOM, 3 BASS DRUMS, and 3 CYMBALS. The music is in 4/4 time and features a complex, syncopated rhythmic pattern with many accents and dynamic markings.

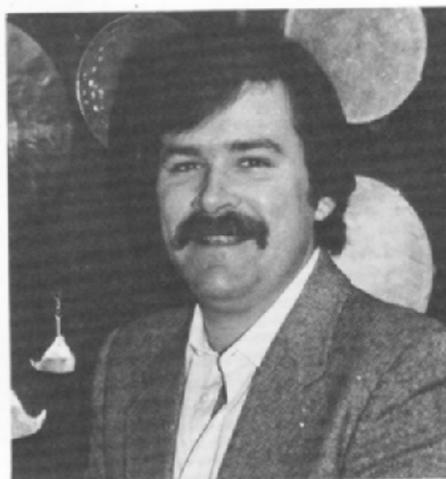
In the last example, the longest notes receive the most emphasis from the percussion section. All the percussion voices can contribute to set up and reinforce the ensemble rhythms.

When percussion fills or solos are used as transitions between two sections of music they should match the intensity of the first section; sustain or change to the intensity of the second section.

The guitar and piano are generally used as a "comping" background in contemporary jazz/rock music. They supply a rhythmic and harmonic accompaniment. Due to the wide range of these instruments and the liberties given to the individual players, it is difficult to consistently reinforce their patterns. Because the rock and Latin idioms offer more repetitive patterns than jazz, it is easier for the keyboard percussion to duplicate guitar and piano passages. Auxiliary percussion may also be added to enhance the idiom:

Musical score for auxiliary percussion. It features five staves: GUITAR (with chords C and F), KEYBOARD I, KEYBOARD II, CLAVES, and MARACAS. The music is in 4/4 time and shows rhythmic patterns for each instrument, with the guitar and keyboards providing harmonic support.

The ideas I have presented are just a few ways to achieve a "rhythm section sound." For a successful interpretation of the character and excitement of jazz, rock, or Latin music, the marching percussion arrangement must integrate elements from the original rhythm section into the final score.



JIM CAMPBELL

Jim Campbell is a veteran clinician throughout the United States and Canada in the development of the contemporary marching percussion ensemble. His nineteen years of experience in the outdoor percussion idiom has led to his wide recognition as a teacher, arranger, and adjudicator. Recently, he was responsible for the development of the Guardsmen Drum and Bugle Corps, a four-time DCI finalist, and is currently a member of the DCI Judges Guild. Jim received a B.S. in Music Education and a M.M. in Performance from Northern Illinois University. He is considered a versatile and experienced performer in all areas of percussion. Currently, Jim is Assistant Professor of Music at Montana State University in Bozeman, and teaches percussion, electronic music techniques, and conducts a jazz ensemble.

COLLEGIATE MARCHING PERCUSSION ENSEMBLE PERFORMANCE TO TAKE PLACE

The 1982 PASIC will feature performances by several collegiate marching percussion ensembles scheduled to take place on Sunday, November 21 in Dallas. This event will be adjudicated by a group of leading percussion authorities. A committee composed of Ward Durrett, Fred Sanford and Jay Wanamaker has been established to select a limited number of ensembles for this performance.

If your college marching percussion ensemble would like to be considered for this performance please write to Jay A. Wanamaker, PAS Marching Percussion Chairman, as soon as possible at this address: Alfred Publishing Co., Inc., P.O. Box 5964, Sherman Oaks, Ca. 91413.