

THE SOLO WORKS FOR MARIMBA OF GORDON STOUT:
COMPOSITIONAL EVOLUTION AND THE CHALLENGES
OF PERFORMANCE PRACTICE

BY

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Introduction

The modern concert marimba is a young instrument. The current standards of design and tuning of the wooden bars have only existed for the past century. The journey to becoming a respected classical instrument was gradual and necessitated the work of composers willing to explore this unfamiliar instrument. The hard work of talented musicians took these early pieces beyond the written notes, to show the promise of a new genre in the world of solo classical music.

The first concerto for solo marimba and orchestra was not written until 1940, when American composer Paul Creston composed his *Concertino for Marimba and Orchestra*. The next concerto of note was Darius Milhaud's *Concerto for Marimba and Vibraphone*, written in 1947. Beyond the arrangements and short etudes composed by marimba virtuoso Clair Omar Musser, the first multi-movement work for solo marimba was the *Suite for Marimba* by Alfred Fissinger, written in 1950.

The Fissinger *Suite* would have additional significance, when it became the inspiration for the first compositions by a young marimbist named Gordon Stout in 1969.¹ Stout would go on to study composition in college and in addition to a prolific career as a concert soloist, would compose some of the most important works in the entire repertoire for the solo marimba.

This document will begin with an overview of the background and career of Gordon Stout up to the date of the document's composition. Additional information will be given regarding the unique grip style used by Stout when playing four-mallet marimba and its influence on his compositional style. Selected works from his oeuvre will be discussed to display changes in his style during his two distinct periods of composition in the 1970s

1. Gordon Stout, interview by author, Ithaca College, Ithaca, NY, March 26, 2012.

and the 1990s to the present. The technical challenges of performing his music will be discussed and lead into the greater portion of this document.

The greater focus of this document will be the creation of a reference book of technical exercises for developing the facility to perform selected works for solo marimba by Gordon Stout. The solo marimba works of Stout are among the most performed pieces in this genre.² This reality is made more significant by the fact that the repertoire of solo marimba works grows each year as the musical and technical boundaries of the instrument continue to be explored.

The importance of adding a resource of this type to the field of percussion pedagogy is due to the absence of texts that provide specific practice methods for the works of any one marimba composer. Preparing a solo marimba work for performance involves technical mastery of the notes, development of musical directives such as dynamics and phrasing, and learning or memorization of the notes. The nature of the marimba bars graduating in size towards the lower octaves requires the player to often look at the notes they are attempting to strike to ensure accuracy, adding a visual memory component to the physical muscle memory.

Providing a resource with technical exercises and recommendations for practice will save time for percussion teachers and students alike. Teachers will save time attempting to create methods for helping students execute specific technical challenges and choose sticking patterns for certain passages. This will be especially important if a student wishes to play a piece that the teacher has not personally performed. Students will benefit

2. Compositions Research Database, "Two Mexican Dances." <http://www.pas.org/TEACH/ComposResearch.aspx> (accessed November 15, 2012).

from this resource by having the reference on hand if they have forgotten any of the detailed practice methods suggested by their teachers. It will also aid them in being a more self-sufficient learner and add to their confidence as a percussion performer. Both teachers and students will additionally benefit from this resource by using it to quickly identify the difficulty level of a particular solo and make an informed decision on the appropriateness of the solo based on the student's current technical abilities on the marimba.

Learning or memorizing notes and trying to master certain sticking patterns with rhythmic accuracy at the same time can be frustrating to a performer and is an inefficient way to practice. It is more efficient to identify the most challenging technical aspects of a piece and develop the facility to execute these passages up to the suggested performance tempo before learning or memorizing the written notes. When this method is implemented, the overall learning process of a solo is accelerated and the player will be ready for performance in a shorter time period.

The reference book will be titled "The Gordon Stout Study Guide: Technical Exercises for Solo Marimba Repertoire". It will contain its own table of contents, introduction, explanation of how to use the book, background information on each piece, technical exercises for selected four-mallet works, and recommendations for practice and performance techniques in specific measures or sections.

Chapter 1: Background

Gordon Stout was born in 1952 in Wichita, Kansas. Born into a musical family, he was surrounded by music from an early age. He began his musical studies at age 5 on the piano after the Stout family moved to Ann Arbor, Michigan. From this early age, he was gifted with a natural ear for music and when practicing the piano, began to create short songs and melodies on his own. His mother encouraged his writing and would transcribe these melodies since he did not know how to write music yet. Her encouragement was also a result of seeing a young child being inspired to practice his instrument, which is no small feat at such a young age.¹

Stout began his studies on the marimba at age 10 with his first percussion teacher James Salmon. During his studies, Salmon introduced him to playing marimba with four mallets. As Stout continued his studies on piano and percussion, his musical ear continued to develop and absorb the music he played and listened to. After studying the *Suite for Marimba* by Alfred Fissinger, he drew inspiration from the chorale-like slow movements that would help him create ideas for what would become his first two compositions for marimba.² A more detailed description of the writing process will be discussed in Chapter 2.

After composing his first solos for marimba titled *Elegy* and *Reverie* during his senior year of high school, Stout's mother brought the manuscripts to a member of the composition faculty at the University of Michigan. The professor felt that young Gordon showed promise as a composer and encouraged him to continue writing. As a result of this encouragement, he enrolled as a percussion and composition major after being

1. Gordon Stout, interview by author, Ithaca College, Ithaca, NY, March 26, 2012.

2. Ibid.

accepted to the Eastman School of Music in Rochester, New York in the fall of 1970. Stout studied at Eastman for the next six years, earning both his Bachelor of Music and Master of Music degrees in percussion in 1974 and 1976 respectively. He would eventually earn a Master's degree in composition in 1980. His primary percussion teacher was John Beck and his composition teachers included Joseph Schwantner, Samuel Adler, and Warren Benson.

After graduation he joined the faculty at St. Mary's College of Maryland as a percussion and music theory teacher from 1976-79. The 1970s contained a steady output of music for both solo marimba and ensembles of various sizes due to his composition studies at Eastman and his focus on growing as a performer. Some of Stout's most seminal works that have become standards of marimba repertoire were written during this period such as *Etudes for Marimba Book 1, 2, and 3*, *Two Mexican Dances*, and *Astral Dance*. The first book of etudes will be discussed in Chapter 2.

In 1980, Stout was named Assistant Professor of Percussion at Ithaca College in Ithaca, NY. The 1980s saw a draught in composing, with his only two pieces being *Triptych* for marimba duet (1980) and *Diptych No. 3* for marimba duet (1989). Being a young professor consumed much of his free time during this period. Additionally, he was married in 1981 and devoted more of his time to his family. However, beyond the busy schedule of teaching, performing, and being a newlywed, he is unsure as to why he was not inspired to compose during this period.³

Stout earned the titles of Associate Professor with tenure in 1986 and Full Professor in 1997 at Ithaca College, where he teaches to this day. The 1990s remained a busy time as he was named Chair of the Performance Studies Department in 1992 (a position he

3. Ibid.

continued until 2004) and began composing more frequently. He wrote nine pieces including works for solo marimba, percussion ensemble, and marimba duo with wind ensemble. Additionally, he published his *Ideo-Kinetic Workbook*, developed from years of playing and teaching for developing a greater command of the marimba through peripheral interval exercises. This will be discussed at various points in relation to Stout's performance methods of various pieces.

The first decade of the 2000s has seen a steady continuation of composition with one or more works written nearly every year. Stout has continued to perform and teach, serving as an invaluable asset to the field of percussion pedagogy. Many of his former students have gone on to have successful careers as solo performers and collegiate educators. As a composer, he continues to write pieces for his own performances and finds inspiration from various instruments and styles of music.

Musical Influences and Composition Teachers

Stout is influenced by various composers and styles of music. Although his influences rarely appear in his music in an obvious way, they inspire him on a less intentional and more aural level. He allows his ear to lead him through ideas in an improvisatory way, rather than conceiving a piece in terms of functional music theory or a planned sequence of chords.⁴

Stout began his composition studies during his first year at the Eastman School of Music. He did not write for the marimba as a freshman or sophomore. The only exception was *Andante and Allegro* which is for marimba accompanied by piano, written during his freshman year under the tutelage of Joseph Schwantner. Under Samuel Adler in his sophomore and junior years, he wrote brass quintets, clarinet choir pieces, string quartets, and pieces for other non-percussion instruments. To the best of his knowledge, he did not write for the marimba during his time with Adler. By his senior year (1973-74) he had the chance to write more serious literature for solo marimba under Warren Benson. This was encouraged by Benson who was a percussionist at heart, in addition to teaching composition.⁵

While in school, Stout was drawn to and inspired by the music of Béla Bartók, Olivier Messiaen, Joseph Schwantner, and the symphonies of Gustav Mahler. Outside of the classical realm he still enjoyed some rock music and began to study and appreciate jazz more deeply. In subsequent chapters, the incorporation of various influences will be discussed in regards to specific pieces.

4. Gordon Stout, interview by author, Ithaca College, Ithaca, NY, March 26, 2012.

5. Ibid.

Four-Mallet Grip Technique

An important factor in the playing and compositional style of Gordon Stout is his unique grip technique for playing four-mallet marimba. What has generally become known as “Gordon’s Grip” was the unintentional result of being shown a starter grip by his first percussion teacher James Salmon. Salmon was a student of renowned marimbist Claire Omar Musser who was the creator of the “Musser Grip” for holding two marimba mallets in each hand. When it was time to show young Gordon a way to hold four mallets, Salmon felt that his hands were neither big enough nor strong enough for the full Musser Grip. His solution was to teach Stout a “starter grip” to become familiar with the technique which involved choking up on both mallets in each hand.⁶

When Stout holds two mallets in one hand the outside mallet, further from the thumb, is placed between the middle and ring fingers with the end of the shaft extending past the palm. The inside mallet lays underneath of the outside mallet (thinking top to bottom as going down to the floor with your hand in playing position, palms facing the floor) within the grasp of the fingers (see Figures 1.1-1.3). The somewhat similar “Burton” grip, named for jazz vibist Gary Burton, also extends the outside mallet shaft past the bottom of the palm, but holds the outside mallet between the index and middle fingers (see Figure 2).

With “Gordon’s Grip”, he changes mallet intervals like the Musser/Stevens Grip by rotating/rolling the inner mallet in and out. He rolls the mallet across the index finger, while extending the index finger and aids the spreading of the interval by pulling on the back end of the inner mallet away from the center of the palm with his bottom three fingers (see Figures 3.1 and 3.2).

6. Ibid.

Figure 1.1- Gordon's Grip, bottom view.



Figure 1.2- Gordon's Grip, top view.

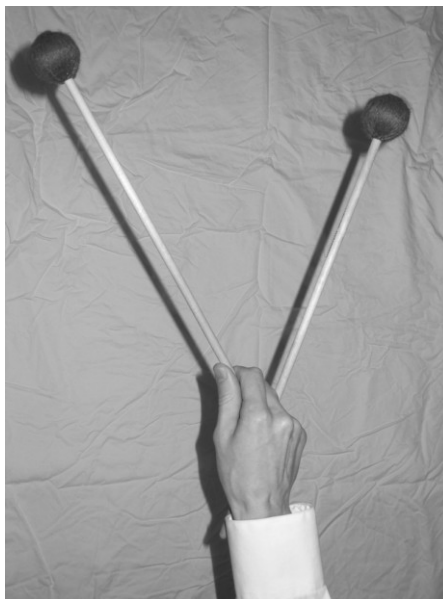


Figure 1.3- Gordon's Grip, side view of mallet shaft crossing.

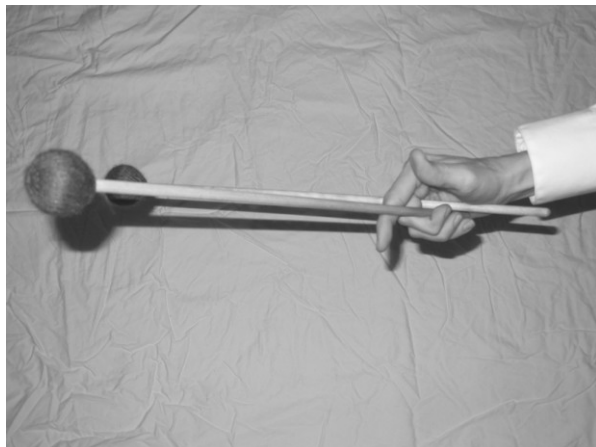


Figure 2- Burton Grip



Figure 3.1- Gordon's Grip,
larger intervals, bottom view.

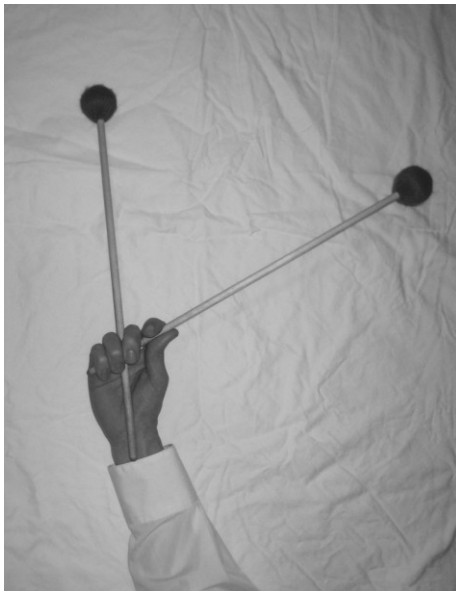


Figure 3.2- Gordon's Grip,
larger intervals, top view.



It was not until adulthood, after composing his first book of etudes in 1973 that Stout learned the origin of his unique grip. Salmon explained that by the time Stout's hands were larger and stronger, he had already developed such a strong technical facility that his teacher saw no need to change his grip. The idea Salmon had was to wait until Stout's hands grew in size and strength and then pull the mallets out to give him a more traditional Musser Grip (see Figure 4). Stout was grateful for this as his grip has been an important part of defining his style of playing.⁷ More details of how this has affected his compositions will be discussed in chapters 2 and 3.

Figure 4- Musser Grip



7. Ibid.

Chapter 2: Early Marimba Solos

Elegy (1969)

Elegy for solo marimba was the first piece that Stout wrote for marimba and was composed in 1969 during his senior year of high school. The impetus for *Elegy* and his second piece *Reverie* came during study hall, where he would write down themes and ideas on paper. Later, he would take the ideas home and play them on the marimba where he could develop them further by improvising and expanding his initial chord sketches. Due to the size of the marimba he owned at this time, his first pieces were designed for an instrument with a range of three and a half octaves from F3 to C7.

Stout describes *Elegy* and *Reverie* as “study pieces” based on the *Suite for Marimba* by Alfred Fissinger.¹ The *Suite*, written in 1950, was performed regularly and recorded by marimba soloist Vida Chenoweth on her album “Classic Marimbist.” The chorale-like first and third movements of the piece were the particular sections that inspired Stout’s pieces, which were also chorale studies for four mallets rolling throughout. The opening of the Fissinger *Suite* is a clear influence on the opening of *Elegy* as both pieces shift back and forth between the tonality of F and Gb.² Stout’s development of these sounds remained focused on intervals of a 4th and 5th with some tertian based harmonies.

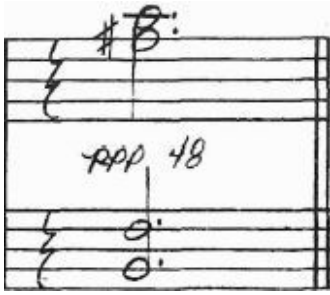
Stout’s final chord also shows the influence of an open, extended chord sound. Movement 3 of the *Suite* ends on a Gmaj9 chord and *Elegy* ends on an Emin11 chord spelled with the G in the bottom (see Ex. 1).³ As mentioned earlier, it is important to remember that Stout never composed with a conscious attempt to create specific chords or harmonic progressions. His ear led him to new ideas which became his final products.

1. Gordon Stout, interview by author, Ithaca College, Ithaca, NY, March 26, 2012.

2. Alfred Fissinger, *Suite for Marimba* (Chicago: Percussion Arts, 1950).

3. Gordon Stout, *Elegy (1969): for Marimba Solo* (Asbury Park, NJ: Studio 4 Music, 1978).

Example 1.1- Alfred Fissinger *Suite for Marimba*, mvt. 3, m. 48.



Example 1.2- Gordon Stout *Elegy*, m. 135.



Elegy has a simple ABA form with a transitional section before the second A section. The repetitive nature of the piece shows the compositional prowess of a young student yet the nature of the chords themselves and the fact that it was composed by ear at the marimba show the promise a gifted composer.

Reverie (1969)

As noted before, *Reverie* was inspired by the Fissinger *Suite* and was a rolling chorale piece. Stout continued to use harmonies built on 4ths and 5ths that sound like open voiced 7th chords. It is similar in form to *Elegy* in that it has an ABA form with a coda section toward the end. The piece ends on the same chord voicing as the Fissinger's

final chord of the third movement. The only difference is that *Reverie* ends on an Fmaj9 chord (F-C-G-E) compared to the Fissinger's Gmaj9 chord (G-D-F#-A) (see Ex.2).⁴

Example 2- Gordon Stout *Reverie*, m. 109.



More similarities between *Reverie* and *Elegy* relate to issues of musical notation and note “spelling”. Many of the rules of accidentals and the difference between tied notes and phrase markings would become a common thread in Stout’s future music. The most common rule found in Stout’s music, which began with his first two pieces, is that accidental notes are valid in their specific measure and only the specific *octave* they are notated in. If an F is labeled sharp (#) in the upper staff/octave and an F is present in the lower staff/octave, the lower F remains natural.

Elegy and *Reverie* additionally show examples of how the accuracy of accidentals is determined by differentiating between tied notes and phrase markings. From mm. 44-45 in *Elegy*, the two notes in each hand are tied across the bar line, yet the flat signs for all 4 notes were printed again on the down beat of m. 45. This trend continued through many points of the scores for both *Elegy* and *Reverie* and Stout admits that these were unnecessary.⁵ Between mm. 68-69 in *Elegy* we see the importance of clarifying that the

4. Gordon Stout, *Reverie (1969): for Marimba Solo* (Asbury Park, NJ: Studio 4 Music, 1978).

5. Gordon Stout, interview by author, Ithaca College, Ithaca, NY, March 26, 2012.

marking above these five chords is a phrase marking. As a result, the B in the left hand on the down beat of m. 69 is natural (see Ex. 3).⁶

Example 3- *Elegy*, mm. 68-69.



The choices of note spelling in Stout's first two pieces show examples of both a young musician untrained in conventions of enharmonic spelling and a composer who made decisions based on his opinion of the chord roots. He is unsure of how he made certain choices in spelling other than maintaining continuity from the first time a note appears in each piece. In m. 15 of *Reverie*, the chord of Cb-Gb-Cb-Bb appears to be a misspelled BM7 chord. Stout feels that he spelled the root as a Cb to maintain continuity with the Cb notes that appear in m. 2 (see Ex. 4). He chose not to spell the note as B natural to continue the use of flats and avoid an immediate switch to a key with sharps.

Connecting again to spelling based on his choice of the chord's root, we see that his first use of a sharp is the C# of m. 17. He chose C# over Db due to seeing and hearing the chord as the key of A major (see Ex. 5).⁷ As a high school student with no formal composition training, he had not been told to avoid switching between sharps and flats as often as he did in both *Reverie* and *Elegy*.

6. Gordon Stout, *Elegy (1969): for Marimba Solo* (Asbury Park, NJ: Studio 4 Music, 1978).

7. Gordon Stout, interview by author, Ithaca College, Ithaca, NY, March 26, 2012.

Example 4- *Reverie*, m. 15.



Example 5- *Reverie*, m. 17.



Reverie shows early examples of an important aural aspect of Stout's music, which is a preference for open-voiced chords. With a standard chord using a root, third, fifth, and octave, Stout will typically choose to play the root and fifth in the left hand with the third and octave in the right hand one octave or more above (see Ex. 5).⁸ Some of the physical reasons for these choices will be discussed in relation to *Etude No. 3* from the first book of etudes.

Five Etudes for Marimba Book 1

The first book of etudes holds an important stance in the early stage of Stout's career due to the inspiration behind the five pieces and the challenges they still present to today's marimba players despite being written nearly 40 years ago. Each of the five

8. Ibid.

etudes was created to address a particular technical challenge. Stout did not focus on complex formal structures as each piece has an ABA¹ form. He took inspiration from his theory and composition studies but remained focused on the technical goals of each piece. Throughout the rest of this document, references to the four marimba mallets will number the mallets as 1 through 4 from left to right. The left hand holds mallets 1 and 2 and the right hand holds mallets 3 and 4. The use of terms regarding stroke technique such as “double vertical” and “single independent” can be referenced in the Fundamental Stroke Terminology section of the introduction to the Study Guide on page 42.

Etude No. 1

The first etude was created so that Stout could improve his technique of changing mallet intervals within each hand. He felt the need to gain better flexibility in his fingers and to be able to change intervals with more ease and speed. At the time of composition, Stout had recently learned about the diminished scale in theory class, sometimes referred to as the “octatonic” scale. He found the sound of alternating half and whole steps appealing and decided to use it as the sonic inspiration for this piece. As would become a common theme in Stout’s writing, a basic concept or sound is taken, in this case the octatonic scale, and he soon allows his ear to develop it in an unconventional way.

In the first three measures, the inner notes played on mallets 2 and 3 create the scalar melody that emerges from the alternating double vertical strokes. The notes used in these measures come from a scale using the notes G-A-Bb-C#-D-D#-F# (see Ex. 6).

Immediately we see Stout’s ear take the octatonic sound and make it his own. If the scale were to be truly octatonic, the notes used would be G-A-Bb-C-C#/Db-Eb-E-F#. He

believes that he simply played by ear rather than attempting to use an exact scale or use the separate hands in a bitonal way.⁹

Example 6- *Etude No. 1*, m. 3.



The rapid interval changes of the outer A sections present challenges regarding mallet head placement on the accidental notes. The player must choose whether to place the mallets in the center of the bar or on the outside edge closest to the natural bars. The other prominent performance issue is that of wrist angle when the left hand shifts from two natural notes to one natural and one accidental. Example 6 shows the left hand note change from D-G to D-Bb. Stout has noticed over the years that this technical challenge has made this etude the only one that gives more trouble to Musser/Stevens Grip players.¹⁰ Figure 5 displays the wrist angle used in m. 3 to play the first interval change using Gordon's Grip. Figure 6 displays the wrist angle using Stevens Grip. The clear increase in wrist angle when using Stevens Grip shows the extra amount of arm movement needed to play *Etude No. 1*. Exercises for this particular challenge will be presented in the Study Guide.

9. Gordon Stout, interview by author, Ithaca College, Ithaca, NY, March 26, 2012.

10. Ibid.

Figure 5- *Etude No. 1*, m. 3, first interval change using Gordon’s Grip.

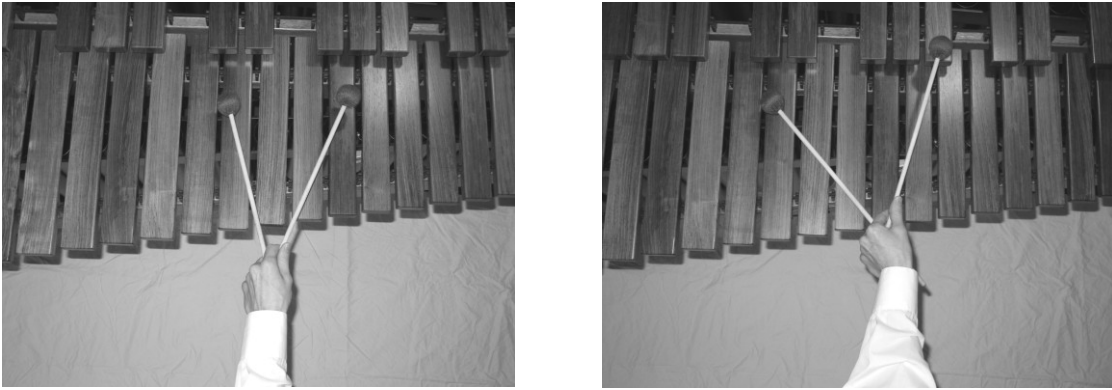


Figure 6- *Etude No. 1*, m. 3, first interval change using Stevens Grip.



The B section of mm. 24-34 shows another example of a slight deviation from the true octatonic scale as well as a technical challenge involving playing octaves between the hands. Mm. 24-27 use ascending scales based on G and F respectively, with each one starting a fourth below the tonic (see Ex. 7). In each scale, this fourth below the tonic is a flat sixth scale degree, which acts as an “incorrect” note. The G-based scale should have D# instead of D natural and the F-based scale should have C# instead of C natural.

Example 7- *Etude No. 1*, mm. 26-27.



The technical challenge of this section lies in playing octaves between the two hands. It is easy to close the octave interval between the hands if each hand is unable to travel the same distance and speed between each note. To combat the initial leap of a fourth, the player can attack the first notes of each measure with mallets 1 and 3 and continue playing the remaining notes with mallets 2 and 4. Technical exercises for gaining accuracy in this section will also be found in the Study Guide.

Etude No.2

The second etude was created to improve Stout's use of the "ideo-kinetic" technique of performing. His use of this technique is defined by focusing your eyes on the center of your playing area and training your peripheral vision and muscle memory to accurately play notes outside of your central field of vision to avoid constantly moving your eyes back and forth. As a sophomore in college, Stout dated a pianist who introduced him to a book that discussed an ideo-kinetic philosophy for piano performance.¹¹ He felt that some of the basic physical ideas of this broad subject could be applied to the marimba and, in addition to *Etude No. 2*, continued to create more exercises in this style. After years of using and teaching ideo-kinetic exercises to his students, Stout compiled various exercises to publish *Ideo-Kinetics: A Workbook for Marimba Technique*.¹²

Etude No. 2 is unique among the pieces in *Book 1* as it is the only etude that uses two mallets instead of four. It uses a motion that would become the first exercise in his *Workbook* and involves playing hand-to-hand triplets focused around the note D with the first note of each triplet being used to play notes at varying distances from the center note. The larger outer leaps of *Etude No. 2* strike notes that are an octave or more away

11. Luigi Bonpensiere, *New Pathways to Piano Technique: A Study of the Relations Between Mind and Body with Special Reference to Piano Playing* (New York, Philosophical Library, 1953).

12. Gordon Stout, interview by author, Ithaca College, Ithaca, NY, March 26, 2012.

from the center note.¹³ One of the more extreme moments of these leaps is seen in mm. 21-24, where the center note has become A (see Ex. 8). The underlying ideo-kinetic idea throughout the piece requires the player to focus their eyes on the various center notes and strike the outer notes accurately using peripheral vision and muscle memory.

Example 8- *Etude No. 2*, mm. 21-24.



In a broader perspective of Stout's career, this exploration of ideo-kinetics in two and four-mallet playing would come to define his playing style and to a lesser extent, his compositional style. He has continued to use ideo-kinetic techniques to create a greater ease in physical and visual execution of his music and the music of other composers. His trust in years of developing muscle memory and spatial awareness on the marimba allow him to move across the instrument with less eye movement and the use of arm shift motions to execute techniques such as double lateral strokes and single-alternating strokes in note groupings of an octave distance or greater.¹⁴

Etude No. 3

The third etude was written to help Stout gain greater control over different types of articulation and various levels of accents as well as practice playing octaves in both hands. At this time, he had gained a reputation as the "house percussionist" for contemporary music. He was involved in many performances of new music by

13. Gordon Stout, *Five Etudes for Marimba Book 1: 2* (Indianapolis, Colla Voce, 1988).

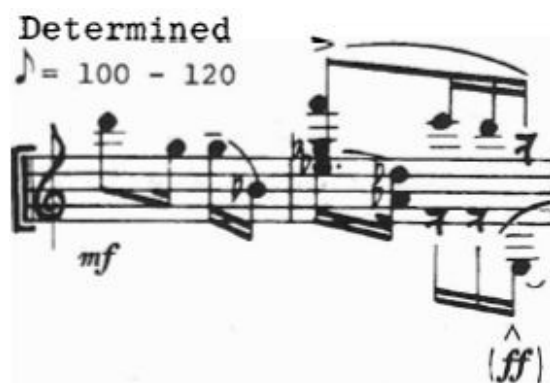
14. Gordon Stout, interview by author, Ithaca College, Ithaca, NY, March 26-27, 2012.

composers such as George Crumb and Joseph Schwantner, who had been Stout's composition teacher during his freshman year at the Eastman School of Music.

Many aspects of these contemporary pieces were serialized including dynamics and articulation. Stout recalls that much of the music being performed required great control of dynamics. He also performed pieces where the serialization process resulted in each note having a different level of articulation or accent.¹⁵

Etude No. 3 is unique among most marimba repertoire of the time as it asked for clear differences in levels of accent. The etude uses tenuto (-), standard (>), and marcato (^) accents. Example 9 shows the first two measures, in which we immediately see the three levels of accent being applied. Another aspect of this piece that is typical of most works in his early period is the absence of time signatures. *Etude No. 3* in particular displays a clear example of Stout's intention for the player to phrase the music in terms of the note groupings and accents instead of being concerned with the changing time signatures.

Example 9- *Etude No. 3*, mm. 1-2.



15. Ibid.

In this piece, the player is to focus on the 16th note groupings. When this is done, the first two measures can be counted as 123-12-12-123.¹⁶ This trend of focusing on note groupings and an exclusion of time signatures was used for the entire first book of etudes and continued throughout the majority of his works in both his early and later periods of composition. This can be found in some of his most popular pieces such as *Astral Dance*, *Two Mexican Dances*, and *Four Episodes*, which will be addressed in the Study Guide.

Harmonically, the sections using single-alternating strokes have an atonal character, which Stout created without a preset plan. The sections with alternating double vertical strokes in octaves were his improvisations on the octatonic scale. The B section of the piece, which begins at m. 27, has the clearest presentation of this scale. Example 10 shows a true octatonic scale used in mm. 27-28 based on the note E.

Each sextuplet is played in the space of one 8th note at a tempo of 100-120bpm. At this speed, the challenge lies in maintaining the proper octave interval in each hand and avoiding flams within each double vertical stroke. The first technical exercise for *Etude No. 3* in the Study Guide will address this challenge.

Example 10- *Etude No. 3*, mm. 27-28.



Etude No. 3 also contains a noteworthy choice of interval writing as it includes the use of a 2nd interval. Intervals of a 2nd are rare in Stout's entire oeuvre as a result of his grip style. The hybrid nature of "Gordon's Grip," including the palm facing downward

16. Ibid.

and the index and middle fingers being placed between the two mallets, make it nearly impossible for Stout to hold an interval smaller than a 3rd.

Example 11 shows m. 32, in which the left hand must play a double vertical stroke using the adjacent notes Db and Eb. To execute this interval, Stout must hold his smallest comfortable interval (a 3rd) and shift his elbow away from his body to create the proper angle for the mallet heads to land on the correct notes. Figure 7 shows the difference in holding a small interval with Gordon's Grip compared to holding a small interval with the Burton Grip, in which there is only one finger in between the mallets.

Example 11- *Etude No. 3*, m. 32.

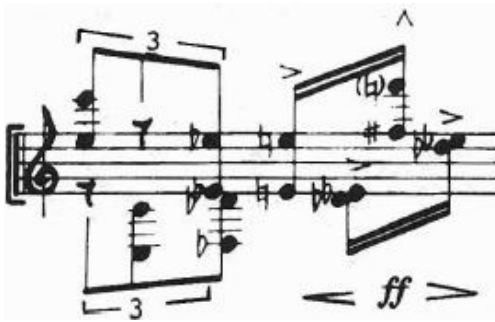


Figure 7.1- Gordon's Grip Small Interval



Figure 7.2- Burton Grip Small Interval



Etude No. 4

The fourth etude began as a counterpoint assignment in theory class. Stout was failing miserably at writing a two-part invention in the style of Bach and decided to write it in his own style using the marimba rather than the piano.¹⁷ Stout's invention uses typical elements such as episodes with subjects that follow each other to cadence points. Yet the typical movement through various keys takes a modern turn when each hand begins to move through different keys independently from one another, creating a bitonal or extended chord sound.

Etude No. 4 begins in a C major tonality on the D dorian scale and introduces the bitonal sound in m. 12, where the left hand begins to shift between F minor and E major. Both hands play in 3rds exclusively throughout the piece. The right hand moves away from C major more frequently in m. 15, yet it does not stick to formal rules of a key. Instead, the right hand tends to play major 3rds, which makes the key hard to define. Example 12 shows this type of right hand movement in mm. 17-18. The left hand briefly shows this method of note movement in m. 17 when it plays a C natural on the third dotted 16th note pulse, deviating from the E major tonality.

Example 12- *Etude No. 4*, mm. 17-18.

17. Gordon Stout, interview by author, Ithaca College, Ithaca, NY, March 26, 2012.

The technical challenges of *Etude No. 4* lie in the contrapuntal movement of the hands. This requires rhythmic independence and confidence in the ideo-kinetic use of peripheral vision to execute notes accurately when the hands reach distances of up to two octaves between each other. Both of these aspects can be clearly seen in Example 13. Measure 19 shows the peak of a contrapuntal arc, where the right and left hands are over two octaves apart.

Example 13- *Etude No. 3*, mm. 18-19.



Among the technical challenges of this etude is that of cleanly attacking four-note double stops between the hands. There are constant opportunities for the double stops to flam if they do not strike the bars together. Measure 26 shows a rhythmic trade-off between the hands which results in them playing the snare drum rudiment known as the “flam tap” (see Ex. 14). The difference in this case is that the rudiment is modified to be played with “flat flams,” which involve the hands playing a clean double stop at the same moment rather than one hand striking before the other. The execution of clean rhythms using double vertical strokes in this piece and others will be addressed thoroughly in the Study Guide.

Example 14.1- *Etude No. 4*, m. 26.



Example 14.2- Flam Tap rudiment.

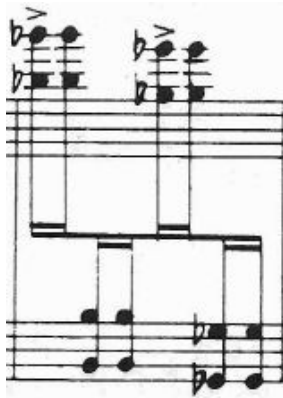


Etude No. 5

The fifth etude was created to further expand the use of octaves. This piece moves beyond the alternating double vertical strokes used in *Etude No. 3* and additionally uses single alternating strokes that are moved up and down the keyboard. He improvised a pattern until he found one that he liked, which ended up focusing on the accidental notes.

During the writing of this etude, Stout's composition teacher Warren Benson introduced him to the concept of "sliding counterpoint." The process involves writing sequential notes on two pieces of paper with one piece above the other. The composer then slides the top or bottom piece of paper to the right by an amount of their choosing e.g. 1 or 2 notes, until they find a new sequence that they approve. Measure 17 of *Etude No. 5* began as block chords and Stout moved the left hand notes to the right, creating alternating double strokes between the hands (see Ex. 15). In measures 20-21, we see a clear example of the sliding counterpoint technique in which Stout chose to slide the left hand notes to the right by one 8th note (see Ex. 16). Aside from *Etude No. 4*, this is the only piece in which Stout intentionally used a form of counterpoint.

Example 15- *Etude No. 5*, m. 17.



Example 16- *Etude No. 5*, mm. 20-21.



The completion of the first book of etudes marked the beginning of Stout's growth as a trained composer of contemporary classical music. The new techniques and influences being absorbed during his studies at the Eastman School of Music would become a part of the processes used to compose future works. His ear and ability to develop ideas from simple improvisations continued to be the driving force of his creativity. The first book of etudes alone has continued to challenge marimbists for nearly four decades with its technical demands and tempos. The future of Stout's writing would eventually move towards exploring the rich sounds of the physically expanding marimba and focus less on specific compositional techniques.

Chapter 3: Later Marimba Solos

After Stout's compositional draught during the 1980s he began to compose more regularly starting in the 1990s. The inspirations for his works varied from challenging himself to compose more simply to taking subconscious influence from popular and jazz music. The ten *Nocturnes*, written in 1990, began as a self-imposed challenge to create shorter pieces with a time limit of one hour to produce pieces of an intermediate technical level. Stout knew that giving himself more time to develop the pieces would bring them to a point where they would cater to his own technique and move beyond an intermediate level of difficulty. The first five *Nocturnes* followed the original plan. By the sixth, he decided to compose with fewer restrictions, which yielded pieces of a higher difficulty level.¹

The subconscious level of Stout's influences tends to become apparent to him after finishing a piece or writing the majority of a piece. *Nocturne No. 10*, for example, reminds him of the music of rock musician Frank Zappa. During his personal interview, he joked that a bass guitar and drum beat could be added to the marimba part.²

Four Episodes

Four Episodes: for Solo Marimba was completed in 1995 and comprised of four unrelated pieces written at different points in Stout's free time. *Episodes No. 1* was developed from previously written music. Stout is unsure of what the original piece was, but focused the ideas of the original work to make the final product shorter.³ Stout used intervals that were the most comfortable in his hands such as 4ths, 5ths, and tritones.

Some of the chords used can be analyzed as major chords with 7ths and flat 9ths. Stout

1. Gordon Stout, interview by author, Ithaca College, Ithaca, NY, March 26, 2012.

2. Ibid.

3. Gordon Stout, interview by author, Ithaca College, Ithaca, NY, March 27, 2012.

feels that these types of chords are used functionally in jazz music, but in his music, there is no direct intent of using chords in terms of functional harmony. In the continuing theme of his compositions, he develops sounds that are pleasing to his ear.⁴

Episode No. 2 was developed to pay homage to the seminal work *Rhythm Song* by marimbist and composer Paul Smadbeck. *Rhythm Song*, like some of Stout's pieces such as *Two Mexican Dances*, has become one of the most frequently performed marimba solos year after year.⁵ The similarities between *Episode No. 2* and Smadbeck's piece are found in the repetitive, minimalist textures, from which small variations keep the listener's attention (see Ex. 17).

Example 17.1- Paul Smadbeck, *Rhythm Song*, mm. 25-26.



Example 17.2- Gordon Stout, *Episode No. 2*, mm. 16-17.



Years before composing *Episode No. 3*, Stout had listened to the album “Children’s Songs” by jazz pianist Chick Corea. He had also performed some of these songs as duos on marimba and vibraphone. After completing the third episode, he felt that it reminded

4. Ibid.
 5. Compositions Research Datatbase, “Rhythm Song.” <http://www.pas.org/TEACH/ComposResearch.aspx> (accessed November 27, 2012).

him of some of the *Children's Songs*, although it was not intentionally modeled after a specific song.⁶

Episode No. 4 came from free improvisations at the marimba. Similar to *Episode No. 1*, Stout found sounds and intervals that he liked without regard to functional harmony. Similarities to Stout's earlier works are seen in the lack of time signatures in this piece as well as the three previous *Episodes*. The improvisatory nature of the piece is personified by the feeling of time pushing and pulling due to the constant switching of rhythmic figures such as groupings of three 16th notes followed by true 16th note triplets. The sudden changes from 8th notes to 16th or 32nd notes also add to this feeling (see Ex. 18).

Example 18- *Episode No. 4*, mm. 6-7.



During the 1990s, more composers began to write for the 5 octave marimba. The increase in production and popularity of marimbas of this size added to the shift towards using a larger range in composition. The first three *Episodes* were written for a 4.5 octave (low F) marimba and the fourth was written for a full 5 octaves. By the turn of the new millennium, Stout would regularly incorporate the lowest octave of the 5 octave marimba as he did in *Episode No. 4* for its dark, rich character and earthy qualities when used for faster rhythmic passages.

6. Ibid.

Sedimental Structures

In 1998 Stout received his first true commissions for composing. His first was a commission by Michael Burritt for the Northwestern University Percussion Ensemble, which became the piece *Desperate Attitudes*. His second commission, titled *Sedimental Structures*, was written for marimbist Robert Van Sice, who gave Stout free reign to create a piece to add to his solo performing repertoire.

The creation of this piece began like most in this second stage of his compositional career which involves improvising short ideas or a small number of four-note chords until he finds sounds that he likes. From this point, he uses various techniques of manipulation and expansion to develop the initial ideas, continuing to lead the process by what sounds pleasing to his ear.

All of the material in *Sedimental Structures* is derived in some way from the notes found in the first measure (see Ex. 19). To develop them, Stout began to stack the notes in various combinations to create new chord sounds as well as manipulate the melodic movement of the first four beats in various octaves and order combinations. The first measure also shows the rare inclusion of sticking suggestions for executing the notes.

Beginning with the *Four Episodes*, Stout numbered the mallets as 1-4 from left to right.⁷

In his early works, he had numbered the mallets from right to left.

Example 19- *Sedimental Structures*, m. 1.

7. Gordon Stout, *Four Episodes: for Solo Marimba* (Van Nuys, CA, Studio 4 Music, 1996).

The use of octave displacement and octave switching combined with a more continuous change of note groupings and time signatures show some of the new techniques developing in Stout's ear. His countless performances and continued development as a musician through experiencing various styles of music on a deeper level have contributed to his growth beyond the techniques used in his earlier period of composition. Example 20 shows one example of the octave switching technique found at the beginning of the chorale section at m. 111. Slight variation is given to the back and forth sound by having mallet 3 play F instead of G on the fourth chord.

The end of the chorale section from letters D to E (mm. 141-151) echoes the section at m. 111 and transitions into the next rhythmic, dance-like section using a variation on a technique used in earlier works such as *Astral Dance*, written in 1979. In this case, Stout takes the note voicing used in the rolled section and transforms it into a rhythmic sticking pattern that accelerates into the faster section at letter E (see Ex. 21). In *Astral Dance*, Stout created a short chorale section from the notes of the leading hand in the dance sections. The concept of his earlier "dance" titled pieces was to have a melody in one hand and an accompaniment in the other hand, with each moving in various rhythmic patterns to create the illusion of a sustained sound.⁸

Example 20- *Sedimental Structures*, m. 111.



8. Gordon Stout, interview by author, Ithaca College, Ithaca, NY, March 26, 2012.

Example 21- *Sedimental Structures*, mm. 147-49.

The image shows two systems of musical notation. The first system consists of two staves: a treble clef staff on top and a bass clef staff on the bottom. The time signature is 2/4. The second system also consists of two staves, with a treble clef staff on top and a bass clef staff on the bottom. The time signature is 4/4. The music features a mix of eighth and quarter notes, with some chords. The second system includes a dynamic marking 'p' and a measure number '149'.

The difference in Stout's newer abilities to create dance-like grooves is clearly shown throughout *Sedimental Structures* by the use of both hands working equally to create the continuous rhythmic, melodic, and chordal sound. Example 22 shows a portion of the rhythmic groove found in the "DANCE!" section of measures 181-196. Various levels of tenuto and standard accent are used to bring focus to certain notes or two-note chords, however the hands do not function in separate roles of melody and accompaniment as they did in early works such as *Astral Dance* and *Two Mexican Dances* (see Ex. 23).

Example 22- *Sedimental Structures*, mm. 191-94.

The image shows a single system of musical notation with a bass clef staff. The time signature is 2/4. The music consists of a rhythmic groove with eighth and quarter notes, some of which are accented or have tenuto marks. The measure number '191' is written at the beginning of the staff.

Example 23- *Mexican Dance No. 1*, mm. 7-8.

The image shows two systems of musical notation. The first system consists of two staves: a treble clef staff on top and a bass clef staff on the bottom. The time signature is 2/4. The second system also consists of two staves, with a treble clef staff on top and a bass clef staff on the bottom. The time signature is 2/4. The music features a mix of eighth and quarter notes, with some chords. The second system includes a dynamic marking 'p' and a measure number '149'.

The continuous melodic movement in *Sedimental Structures* and its use of single alternating, double stop, double vertical, and double lateral strokes creates numerous challenging sticking patterns. One of the most common challenges is switching between double stops and single independent strokes. Example 24 uses m. 5 to demonstrate how these situations create the difficulty of attacking these double stops without a flam between any of the mallets. The wrist angle in the hand playing a double stop must be set to ensure that both mallets are attacking from an equal horizontal plane. Depending on the mallet used to attack the single independent notes, the player must quickly adjust the wrist angle used to attack the subsequent double stop in the same hand without a flam. The various sticking pattern challenges of this piece will be addressed in the Study Guide.

Example 24- *Sedimental Structures*, m. 5.



The earthy qualities of *Sedimental Structures* and the use of larger intervals across the keyboard additionally bring light to aspects of Stout's four-mallet grip technique as they pertain to his continued compositional style. The similarities in Stout's grip to the Musser/Stevens grip make it easier for him to reach larger intervals in the bottom range of the modern 5 octave marimba. His ability to shift between larger and smaller intervals is done with more ease than marimbists who use the traditional cross grip or Burton grip

techniques. Stout feels that traditional grip performers sometimes have more difficulty with the way he writes for the left hand in the bottom octave of the marimba in his newer pieces.⁹ The wooden bars are physically the widest in the bottom octave, which can make reaching an octave interval very challenging. This is especially true on professional models made by the American company Mallettech, which Stout uses in performance.

Stout's use of more open voiced chords and intervals is another common thread in his works, as mentioned in Chapter 2. Aside from the physical aspects of not being able to hold a 2nd interval in his grip, his ear has always preferred the sound of open voiced chords. He likens his preferred voicing to the acoustics of the overtone series, where larger intervals are towards the bottom and smaller intervals are towards the top. He feels that this voicing brings out a fuller, more resonant sound from the instrument.¹⁰

In the final section of this document, The Gordon Stout Study Guide will address a selected group of Stout's solo marimba works between 1973 and 2004. The pieces chosen for this document span the early and modern periods of his compositional career and address the technical challenges of each piece. From pieces designed to expand Stout's own technical abilities to those which allow him to explore the rich sounds of the modern 5 octave marimba, performers will now have a resource to bring Stout's works to a level of performance readiness with greater ease.

9. Gordon Stout, interview by author, Ithaca College, Ithaca, NY, March 27, 2012.

10. Ibid.

Conclusion

The career of Gordon Stout as a composer, marimba soloist, and educator continues to this day. He continues to perform around the world in solo concerts, masterclasses and pedagogical residencies. Aspiring marimbists continue to seek him out as a mentor to guide them as developing musicians and inspire them as performers. He completes occasional commissions for new works but does not seek them out. He prefers instead to explore different styles of music that inspire him and compose pieces for his own playing and enjoyment.¹

Many of Stout's compositions maintain their status as hallmarks of the marimba repertoire for their challenges to the performer and enjoyment by countless audiences. This is evidenced by his works being among the most performed each year on student and professional recitals.² His works are also found on the required repertoire lists of many state solo and ensemble competitions.³ Stout's contributions to pedagogy and marimba composition have been recognized at the highest levels in the percussion community. In November of 2012, he was inducted into the Percussive Arts Society Hall of Fame at the Percussive Arts Society International Convention held in Austin, Texas.

Gordon Stout has evolved as a solo marimba composer through a career spanning over four decades at the completion of this document. His early period of the 1970s was marked by influences of his education in music theory and composition. He explored different tonal sources and modern techniques while using basic methods of variation and

1. Gordon Stout, interview by author, Ithaca College, Ithaca, NY, March 27, 2012.
2. Compositions Research Database, "Two Mexican Dances." <http://www.pas.org/TEACH/ComposResearch.aspx> (accessed November 15, 2012).
3. Indiana State School Music Association, "Percussion Solo and Ensemble Manual and Audio Samples Download." <http://www.issma.net/downloads/percmanualgrp1.pdf> (accessed December 11, 2012).

register change. He also pushed himself technically as a performer during this period, using his pieces as challenges for his own ability, developing speed, flexibility, and the ideo-kinetic technique of peripheral awareness and muscle memory. Works such as *Two Mexican Dances* and *Astral Dance* defined a style with melodies emerging from rhythmic accompaniments to create a continuous, singing sound.

Stout's later period from the 1990s to the present has been marked by an even stronger reliance on his ear and exposure to different styles of music. This is combined with even more years of experience as a performer and his continued method of composing from the marimba. Creating at the instrument allows him to incorporate his technical style and ability, making his pieces more comfortable to perform by other marimbists. His ability to improvise also allows him to incorporate his playful and humorous nature at times.

His preference for open-voiced chords and use of the entire 5 octave marimba has continued to explore the abilities of the instrument to create music with a rich, singing quality. Pieces such as *Sedimental Structures*, *Rumble Strips*, and *Beads of Glass* have elements from his early period, but use a more integrated connection between the hands to create the continuous, flowing sound.

The development of The Gordon Stout Study Guide will continue beyond this document to create a resource for all of Stout's solo marimba works. More than twice the amount of pieces discussed in this document can be incorporated to provide a comprehensive book of exercises and background information to enhance the performance of Stout's works by students and professionals for years to come.

The Gordon Stout Study Guide

Technical Exercises for Solo Marimba Repertoire

By David Scimonelli

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Introduction

This book is intended to aid marimba players in the learning process of the solo four-mallet repertoire of Gordon Stout. Where other marimba technique books have focused on many general exercises for the development of overall technical facility, this book offers exercises designed specifically for each solo piece that is discussed. Additionally, background information is provided when it is pertinent to the interpretation of each piece. This book is not a general technique book and is designed under the assumption that the player has had proper training in four-mallet playing using any of the various grip styles. Choosing a piece with an appropriate difficulty level should be based on the player's four-mallet experience. For students, it is recommended that they consult with their teacher on these decisions.

Learning and performing a marimba solo is as much a visual memory based act as it is a muscle memory based act. Memorizing four-mallet solos can be a useful tool for solo marimba repertoire so that technical execution and note accuracy are not sacrificed in performance. When the exercises for a specific piece are practiced and able to be played up to the written tempos, the ability to play the given pattern with the actual written notes of the piece will come faster and accelerate the note learning process.

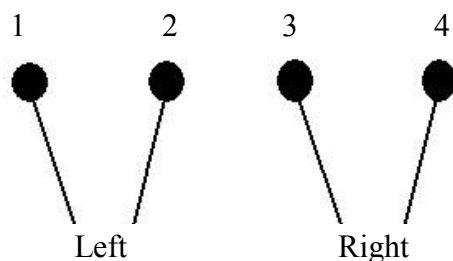
Although the works of Gordon Stout can be performed using any style of four mallet grip, the author personally uses Stevens Grip (the modified version of Musser Grip). This is only relevant to the specific sticking patterns used in the exercises and therefore, suggested stickings for the various pieces. The exercises are to be used under the assumption that the player is studying them while having the solo itself on hand. As a result, upon studying the passage being addressed in a given exercise, a slightly modified sticking may be employed if it will be more appropriate due to the player's grip style.

For more specifics on the Stevens grip and general technical exercises from beginning to advanced, the author strongly suggests using the following books:

- *Method of Movement for Marimba* by Leigh Howard Stevens
- *Permutations for the Advanced Marimbist* by Kevin Bobo

Certain terminology regarding four-mallet technique will be referenced from these important texts. Both are available through Keyboard Percussion Publications at www.mostlymarimba.com.

Mallet Numeration



Mallet Hardness Recommendations

Hard- Hd. Medium- Md. Soft- Sft.

Fundamental Stroke Terminology

#1 - 4 Referenced from *Permutations for the Advanced Marimbist* by Kevin Bobo

1. Single Alternating- repeated alternating notes in a single hand.
(1212 or 3434)
2. Double Lateral Inside- two notes played adjacently in a single hand starting with the inside mallet. (21 21 or 34 34)
3. Double Lateral Outside- two notes played adjacently in a single hand starting with the outside mallet. (12 12 or 43 43)
4. Double Vertical- two notes played simultaneously within a single hand.
(1 & 2 simultaneously or 3 & 4 simultaneously)
5. Double Stop- double vertical strokes played by both hands simultaneously.

Arm Motion Terminology

Swipe- In this method book, the term “swipe” is used to describe situations involving a double lateral inside or outside stroke used to strike two, rapid notes that are at a small interval such as a 2nd with a strong dynamic. Executing a swipe requires a quick, rotating motion in the wrist and a down stroke with a motion that is mostly vertical but with a slight horizontal motion towards the inside or outside mallet to strike the second note.

An “outward swipe” is a double lateral outside stroke where the outside mallet strikes first with a downward motion and the inside mallet is initiated from a quick, inside turning wrist motion, accompanied by a slight horizontal movement toward the outside. This technique will be used for exercises related to *Mexican Dance #2* and *Episode 4*. Figures 1 and 2 show an example of this technique used to quickly strike a 2nd interval using the notes D and C.

Figure 1- Mallet 4 is used to strike the first note (D) of an “outward swipe”.

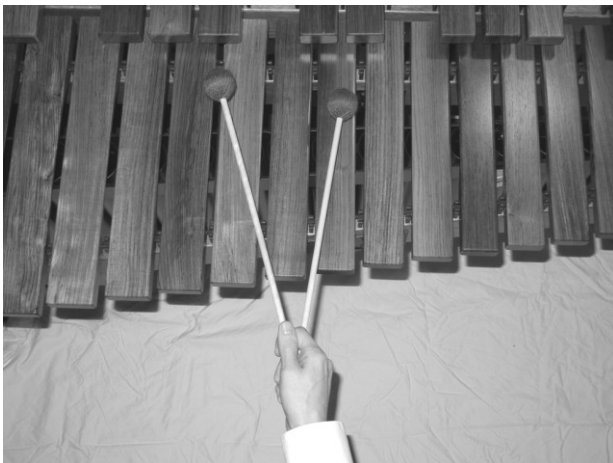
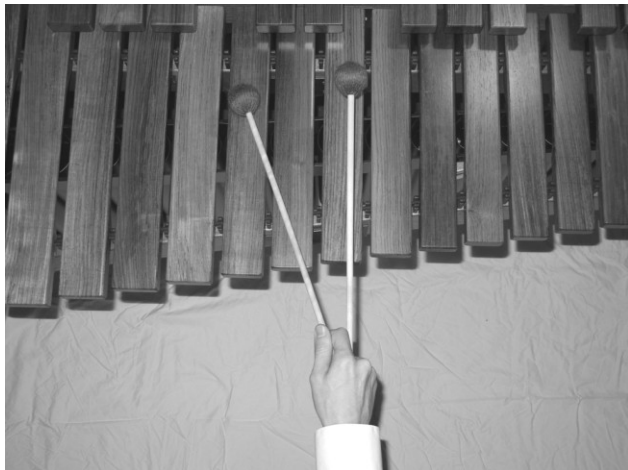


Figure 2- Mallet 3 strikes the second note (C) using an inside turning wrist motion and a slight horizontal movement towards the outside mallet (to the right).



*Since this motion is used mostly to strike two adjacent notes (a 2nd apart), the key is to keep the actual interval in each hand at a larger interval than the one being executed e.g. hold an interval of a 3rd or 4th and use the swipe to strike notes at an interval of a 2nd with a strong dynamic.

An “inward swipe” is the opposite. Therefore, a double lateral inside stroke is used with the inside mallet striking first with a downward motion and the outside mallet is initiated from the quick, outside turning wrist motion, accompanied by a slight horizontal movement toward the inside. This can be demonstrated by repeating the motions described in Figures 1 and 2 in reverse.

Shift- The term “shift” is used to describe situations involving two single alternating strokes or two sets of double vertical strokes for notes that are an octave or more apart. Reaching the notes involves a horizontal (left to right or right to left) movement of the arm where the motion is initiated from the elbow more than the shoulder and requires less of a wrist turn than the “swipe” motion. Specifics regarding the shift motion of individual mallets can be referenced from the “Shift and Interval Change Efficiency” section of the introduction to *Method of Movement for Marimba* by Leigh Howard Stevens. Figures 4-6 demonstrate a shift used to strike two notes a 10th apart (C and E) using two single alternating strokes.

Figure 4- Mallet 3 is used to strike the note C.

Figure 5- Mallet 4 is used to strike the note E a 10th above C. Instead of spreading the mallets to the 10th interval, they are held (in this case) at a 5th, requiring a horizontal shift from the elbow for mallet 4 to strike the second note.

Figure 6- This demonstrates the incorrect way to shift. Notice that the shift is initiated more from the shoulder, causing the elbow to move farther away from the body.

Figure 4- first note



Figure 5- correct shift from elbow



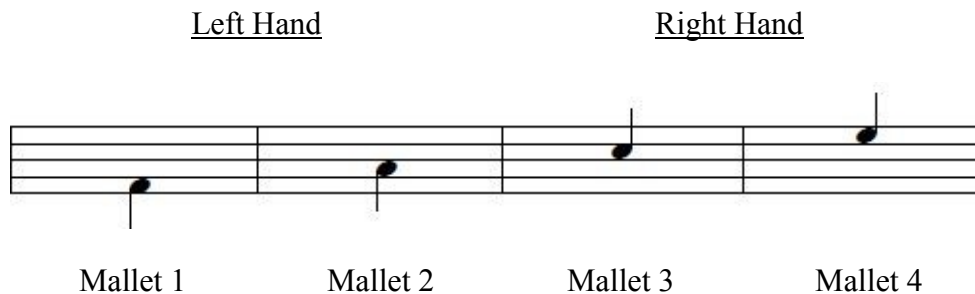
Figure 6- incorrect shift from shoulder



Exercise Notation

The exercises for each piece are written in one of two ways:

Grid- where each mallet is given a space on the standard 5-line staff and a suggested mallet interval for each hand is provided. The player may choose which specific notes are played in any combination of natural and accidental as long as they maintain the suggested interval. In some instances specific notes will be suggested. The left hand note stems will point down and the right hand will point up.



Staff- standard use of the treble and bass clef staves are used. The specific notes written should be used. In most cases, the stem direction rules from the grid notation will apply to which hands are being used in each exercise.

How to Use This Book in Practice

Background Information

Background information on each piece is presented to gain a better understanding of the inspiration behind its composition. Some pieces will have additional information about formal structures. This information comes from the author's research and from personal interviews with Gordon Stout. The author also includes information on each piece's current publisher and professional recordings of the piece if they exist.

Intervals

The suggested mallet intervals for each hand in the grid-based and staff-based exercises are given to approximate or copy the interval each hand will be holding when the real (written) notes are applied in a particular measure or group of measures.

Tempo

When a tempo is given as a range e.g. Quarter note = 90-120 bpm, it means that you are to start practicing the exercise at 90 bpm and work your way up to 120 bpm. The second (or final) tempo is usually the performance tempo of the passage where the given figure will be employed. It is important to work each exercise up to the suggested tempo in preparation for learning the written notes of the given passage. When it is helpful, use additional subdivision options on your metronome such as eighth note, sixteenth note,

triplet, etc. When a subdivision is suggested by the author, it will be stated as “(tempo) plus eighth note” or “plus triplet”.

Learning the Written Notes

Once all the exercises for a given piece are under control at the maximum suggested tempo, the process of learning the written notes can begin. Return to a slower tempo and learn the notes a few measures at a time. Within sections of the same written tempo, learn to play the correct notes confidently and consistently before beginning to increase the tempo. This method will help you work a piece up to a desirable performance tempo at a faster pace.

Practicing Beyond This Book

The process of breaking down technical passages into repetitive exercises is not new, however it is a process that can and should be used for all marimba literature with repetitive sticking patterns and difficult technical passages. After choosing a piece of music it is best to do an initial “walk through” of the piece to make sticking choices. After doing this, you can isolate the technical challenges and patterns contained in the piece that can be turned into exercises. Practice these patterns and exercises until they are comfortable and under control up to the printed tempo of the section they are contained in. Only then should you apply the written notes. After mastering these exercises, they can be used as warm ups each time that you practice the piece. Using these methods will help you learn the piece in a shorter amount of time and decrease the difficulty of working a piece up to a desirable performance tempo.

General Warm Up:

The following exercise is designed to warm up the use of single alternating strokes in various two-mallet combinations. It will be referenced in the warm ups for certain pieces within this book. The exercise is referred to as the acronym **O I L R**. Each letter is an indicator of which mallet to use in **both** hands. These two indicated mallets will begin the one-measure alternating pattern that is set in an eighth note rhythm.

O – Outside (mallets 1 and 4)

I – Inside (mallets 2 and 3)

L – Left (mallets 1 and 3)

R – Right (mallets 2 and 4)

This warm up was passed on from a former teacher and is essentially a sequence of Exercises 134-137 from *Method of Movement for Marimba* by Leigh Howard Stevens.

OILR (Grid Notation):



The exercise can and should be used at multiple intervals in each hand as well as varying tempos and dynamics. It is important to focus on eliminating flams in the attack of any mallet combinations.

The author also recommends practicing exercises from *Ideo-Kinetics: A Workbook for Marimba Technique* by Gordon Stout. It is available through Keyboard Percussion Publications at www.mostlymarimba.com. In addition to exercises designed to help with learning *Mexican Dance #1*, it focuses on exercises designed to aid note accuracy and develop more confidence in gauging the distance between notes on the marimba through peripheral vision and muscle memory. Using this technique to avoid constantly moving your eyes from hand to hand is a key part of Stout's technique and consequently, his compositional style. These skills can be used at the player's discretion when playing a wide range of solo marimba literature.

Five Etudes for Marimba Book 1 (1973)

Etude No. 1

Background Information:

Five Etudes Book 1 is comprised of five short and difficult pieces for marimba. Each is based on a specific technical problem. The first etude is intended to develop better interval changing technique with the inside mallets of each hand. The piece is based on the “octatonic” or diminished scale, however they are not perfectly accurate scales in each instance. The form of this etude and all etudes from Book 1 is an ABA¹ form.

Range: 4 octave marimba

Publisher: Music for Percussion/Colla Voce.

Recorded: Etudes 1-3 are on "Gordon Stout: Music for Solo Marimba".

Mallet Recommendation: All four mallets Md. Hd. - Hd.

Exercises (Staff Notation):

Mm. 1-18

1.

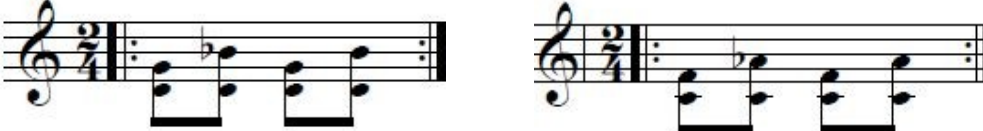
Quarter= 70-115

Keep the outer mallets (1 and 4) stationary as the inner mallets move towards or away from them to avoid having the outer mallets drift from their repeated note.

2.

Dotted Quarter= 100-170

Focus on not allowing mallet 1 to drift to a lower note when you bring mallet 2 back to its starting note. (From E back to C)


3. 

Quarter= 70-115

These exercises for left-hand alone also focus on keeping mallet 1 stationary, using the etude's written notes.

Mm. 24-27

4.  Quarter= 70-115
C scale in octaves using mallets 2 & 3 or 2 & 4.


5.  Quarter= 70-115
C scale in octaves using mallets 2 & 3 or 2

Mm. 29-30 (Grid Notation)

6.  Quarter= 70-115
Both Hands: Octave

The 3421 sticking pattern takes some practice at first as it flows less easily in the hands than a 4312 pattern.

Mm. 19-22, 29-30

7.  Practice double vertical strokes at an interval of a 9th in both hands, focusing more on the left hand.

Create your own exercises such as scales. Getting used to these larger intervals is important regardless of your grip style.

Notes/Recommendations

1. It is important to remember that sticking recommendations in this book have a numbering system of 1-4 from **Left to Right**. Keep this in mind as the published version of this etude book was made at a time where Mr. Stout was still using a numbering system of 1-4 from **Right to Left**.
2. Exercises 1-3 help lay the fundamentals to avoid mallet 1 (or 4) shifting up or down during the close-open-close motion of the interval changes. As the left hand shifts between D-G and D-Bb in m. 1, the left wrist must shift outward (towards the left), out of alignment with the rest of the arm. To keep mallet 1 on the note D as mallet 2 returns from Bb to G, a key trick is to kick the elbow back out away from your side and re-straighten the wrist. Mallet 1 drifting below the note D tends to happen when the whole arm is moved away from your side using the shoulder.
3. Listen for the octatonic/diminished scale “melody” coming from mallets 2 and 3 as the notes move up and down.
4. Ensuring note accuracy at a fast tempo is made easier by choosing where to strike the accidental notes e.g. on the edge or in the center of the bar. Making smart choices will lessen the chance of mallets 2 and 3 overlapping.

Example- In mm. 1-6, place the F# in mallet 4 in the center of the bar as well as the C# struck by mallet 3. When mallet 2 comes up to D#, play it on the edge, thereby avoiding the crossing of mallets 2 and 3.

5. Mm. 24-27 are based on the F and G octatonic scales. The most comfortable way to ensure accuracy of these ascending scales in octaves is to strike the downbeat of each measure with mallets 1 & 3 and continue the rest of the measure with mallets 2 & 4.
6. On the last chord, put more weight on the high Bb and strike it in the center of the bar so the note is heard equally to the lower three notes.
7. In Stout’s entire repertoire including this etude, all 2, 3, and 4 note rolled chords that receive a fresh attack should begin with all notes struck simultaneously and then continuing with hands alternating in the style of a traditional roll. After the first attack, the next stroke should be in the left hand, as it would be if the roll had begun with the right hand alone. In Etude 1, this applies to each down beat of mm. 28 and 31-34.

Etude No. 2

Background Information:

The second etude is based around some of the exercises that became the *Ideo-Kinetics Workbook*. The concept of these exercises is to develop the ability to focus on the notes or bars centered in front of you and play all notes outside of this main field of vision using peripheral vision and muscle memory. It is the only two-mallet piece in *Etudes Book 1*. It began as an improvisation on a pentatonic sound and became focused on the keys of D major and C major.

Mallet Recommendation: Two Md. Hd. – Hd. mallets.

Exercises (Staff Notation):

Ascending C major scale in 2nds

1.  Etc. Quarter= 100-160

Ascending D major scale in 2nds

2.  Etc. Quarter= 100-160

Peripheral vision exercise

3.  Etc.

This is the first exercise of the Stout *Ideo-Kinetics Workbook*. Here we have chosen the note D as the visual focal point that you return to as the first note of each triplet moves outward chromatically through the octave and then returns back to D. Begin slowly, with a goal tempo of Quarter= 60-100.

Mm. 41-49

4.  LH lead 'hertas' on a single note at an interval of a 2nd.
Quarter= 130- 200

Notes/Recommendations:

1. The ideo-kinetic warm up (Exercise 3) will be key in gaining confidence and accuracy to perform this etude. The peripheral vision skills developed will take away some of the mental fatigue that can build if you constantly move your eyes back and forth to see the outer notes.
2. Whenever the short melodic idea of B-C-D-B appears, as in mm. 5, 10, and 24, focus your attention on the moving right hand notes. To keep the stationary left hand from drifting, create your own warm ups such as keeping the left hand on one note while the right hand moves up and down a scale, with an alternating R-L-R-L sticking.
3. Practice mm. 33-36 hands separate at first to better memorize the physical paths that each hand takes. You can then decide which moments are more helpful to look at a particular hand.
4. Accents should be a strong *forte*, while the non-accented notes should be a full sounding *mezzo forte*. The accented notes usually act as a melody emerging from the busy texture.
5. In mm. 34-36, bring out the left hand notes of G#, C#, and D#.

Etude No. 3

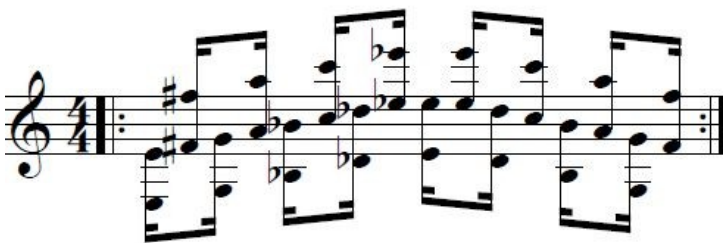
Background Information:

The third etude was written primarily to develop the playing of octaves in each hand. The piece combines atonal harmonies with octatonic/diminished scale passages. As a regular performer of contemporary music in college, Stout noticed how detailed composers were becoming in using differences in articulation to create variations in sound. He chose this etude to help expand his control of different articulations on the marimba. Within this short piece, it is important to make the distinction between the three levels of accents used: *Tenuto* (-), *Regular Accent* (>), and *Marcato* (^). Tenuto is a legato accent that exists within the written dynamic level. A regular accent is one dynamic level louder than written. The marcato accent is even stronger than the regular accent.

Mallet Recommendation: All four mallets Md. Hd. - Hd.

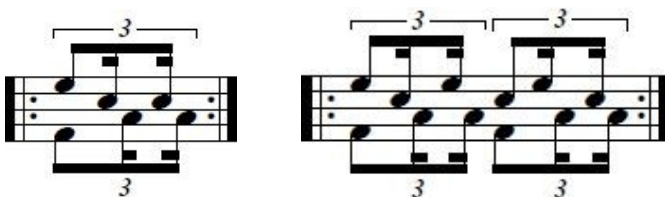
Exercises (Staff Notation):

Octatonic scales in octave intervals

1.  Eighth= 100-160

Play various octatonic scales in octaves, which are a series of alternating whole steps and half steps. The goal is to become comfortable choosing hand motions and mallet head placement (edge or center of accidentals) that will keep the inner mallets from colliding. You will then be able to focus on the rhythmic aspects of moments such as mm. 27-31.

Mm. 36-40 (Grid Notation)

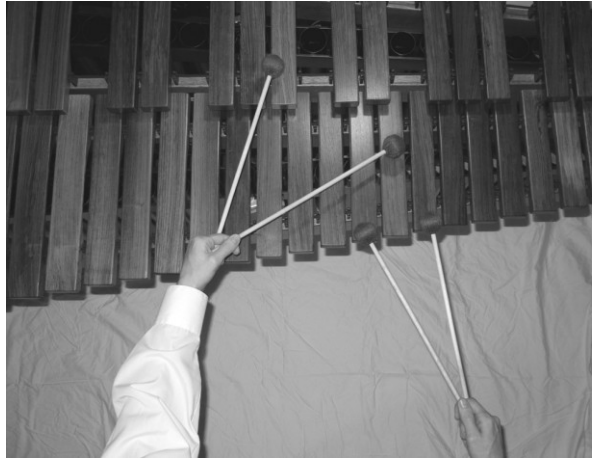
2.  Quarter= 60 - 100
Both Hands: 5th

Phrase the triplet with an emphasis on the down beat to engrain the way it will be played in the etude.

Notes/Recommendations:

1. Stout's intention of not including time signatures is so the performer will focus on the groupings of notes, to avoid playing in a rigid way. For example, since the 16th note stays constant at the beginning of the piece, the first three bars should be counted in 16th note groups as 123-12, 12-123, 12-12-12.
2. In measures 20 and 22, play the down beat notes in the right hand on the edges of the white keys closest to the performer to avoid crossing with mallet 2 (see Figure 7).

Figure 7- Etude 3 m. 20 and 22



3. Mm. 25-26 are printed as 8th note rhythms. This is a mistake by the publisher as these notes should be 16th notes. Stout plays them as 16th notes with two double vertical strokes for every 8th note pulse. This interpretation can be heard in his performance of *Etude 3* on his CD "Gordon Stout: Music for Solo Marimba".
4. The tuplet groupings of 5s, 6s, and 7s found in mm. 27-35 are each meant to fit into one 8th note pulse.
5. When phrase markings occur over certain passages, convey them by slightly emphasizing the first note and bringing out the written crescendos and decrescendos.

Etude No. 4

Background Information:

The fourth etude was written for a counterpoint assignment in music theory class. After struggling to write a two-part invention in the style of Bach, Stout chose to write at the marimba in his own style. The piece is based in the D dorian scale and moves through numerous keys, at times creating a bitonal sound.

Mallet Recommendation: All four mallets Md. Hd.

Exercises (Staff Notation):

*Both Hands are at an interval of a 3rd for **all** exercises.

Scales

1.  Quarter= 60-85

Play scales one hand at a time in double stop thirds in the keys of C, B, Db, and the chromatic scale.

Try these same scales in the pattern referred to as “Krause” scales

2. 

Contrary Motion Scales

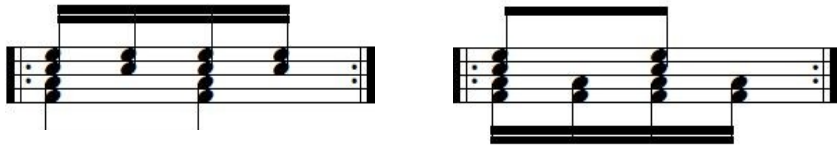
3.  Quarter= 50-85

Both hands play at the same time.

Rhythmic Exercises (Grid Notation)

*With all rhythmic exercises, avoid flams when double stops occur between the hands.

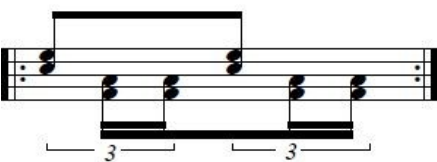
Mm. 3-5

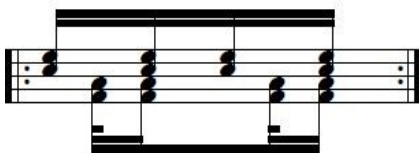
4.  Quarter= 60-85

Mm. 6-7

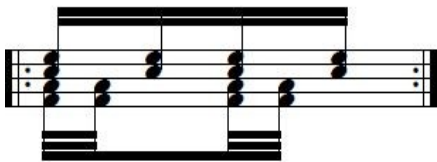
5.  Quarter= 60-85

M. 11

6.  Quarter= 60-85

7. 

M. 12

8. 

M. 17

9.  Dotted 16th= 100-120

Notes/Recommendations:

1. Learning sections of this etude one hand at a time will greatly help muscle memory.
2. One of the most important steps/challenges is choosing where to focus your eyes. In moments where one hand is playing 8th notes and the other is playing 16th notes, it will be easier to look more towards the hand playing 16th notes.
3. An important musical issue will be choosing which hand to bring out more as the melody at any given point. A good rule in spots like mm. 10-16 is to bring out the more steady rhythm (usually in the right hand) while the left hand rhythms fill in the subdivisions.
4. In mm. 17-22 keep the 16th and 32nd note subdivisions even and straight feeling. Avoid letting the groupings of three 32nd notes sound like a looser triplet feel.
5. Another useful tool for the rhythmic aspect of the etude is practicing the entire piece on one set of notes e.g. both hands on C and E and octave apart. The goal is to play accurate rhythms without any flams in your double stops.
6. Playing exercise 7 with the hands reversed can help with preparing for a clean double stop attack on the down beat of the final measure.

Etude No. 5

Background Information:

The fifth etude is another study in octaves involving moving the octaves up and down the keyboard with more alternating single independent strokes as opposed to double verticals. Due to the 4 octave size of the marimbas available to Stout during college, some of the octaves are inconsistent, such as the bottom of the opening pattern being C# and not A#.

Mallet Recommendation:

1	2	3	4
Md. Hd.	Hd.	Hd.	Hd.

Exercises (Grid Notation):

1. 

All Exercises:

Quarter= 90-120

Both Hands: Octave

Mm. 1-16

2. 

3. 

M. 17

4. 

Mm. 47-57

5. 

Notes/Recommendations:

1. Practice the outer A sections with hands separate at first.
2. Once you put the hands together, keep your eyes focused on the one note that is shared by mallets 2 and 3 to ensure accuracy.
3. As you move up and down the keyboard in the A sections, it is recommended to keep each hand in the octave interval and shift the arms left or right. It is more challenging to ensure note accuracy when continually opening and closing the mallet interval in each hand.
4. Bring out the phrasing of the note groupings in each A section. In the first A section, bring out the written accents. In the final A section, emphasize the first note of each beam grouping, which is also shown with phrase markings (slurs).

Two Mexican Dances for Marimba (1974)

Background Information:

The first Mexican Dance was written as the ninth etude for *Etudes Book 2*. Stout's composition teacher Warren Benson felt that it was very different in character from the other etudes. He suggested that Stout write a second piece in a similar style and call them *Two Mexican Dances* due to something about the piece that reminded Benson of Mexico. The piece was not actually inspired by Mexican music and was not intended to be authentically Mexican in any way. The first dance was composed in one day with no revisions. The second dance began on the vibraphone and took longer to complete. As is found in some past and future Stout pieces, time signatures are not used, to focus on the phrasing of note groupings. As the number of notes per measure changes, the pulse of 8th and 16th notes remains the same. * The following exercises do have time signatures for rhythmic clarity.

Range: 4 octave marimba

Publisher: Studio 4 Productions/KPP (www.mostlymarimba.com).

Recorded: "Gordon Stout: Music for Solo Marimba".

"Astral Projections", Resonator Records (www.mostlymarimba.com).

"Animato", Jasmin Kolberg, Resonator Records.

"Saudação", David Hall (www.amazon.com)

Mexican Dance No. 1

Mallet Recommendation: All four mallets Md. Hd. - Hd.

Exercises (Grid Notation):

A Section (mm. 1-25)

1.  Dotted Quarter= 80 - 110
Add triplet subdivision to the metronome.
Left Hand: Octave

Start at an octave on two C notes. Eventually apply the written notes of mm. 1 and 2.

2. Play the left hand notes of mm. 1-3 as written repeatedly. Since m. 3 has eight notes instead of six, continue following the triplet (8th note) subdivisions as the note groupings cycle around the down beats of the metronome. Shift the arm up and down the keyboard to avoid constantly opening and closing the interval of mallets 1 and 2.

3.  Dotted Quarter= 80 - 110
Right Hand: 6th

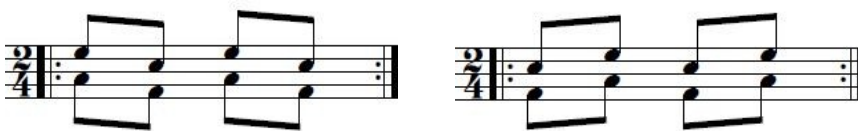
This is to prepare to play the singing, right hand melody of off-beat, three note groupings in the A section.

4. Now play mm. 4-6 as written with both hands. At first, keep the right hand on the same notes (G and E) through all three measures. Then play the right hand notes as written. Keep mallet 3 closer to the ropes so mallet 2 passes above it (see Figure 8).

Figure 8- mm. 4-6, right hand near the bottom ropes.



B Section (mm. 26-43)

5. 


Quarter= 110 – 130

Both Hands: Octave

Focus on avoiding flams. Experiment with moving the octaves around in scales or arpeggios.

A¹ Section (M. 52)

*Practice all exercises in this section at *forte* and *piano*.

6.  Eighth+Dotted Eighth= 80 - 108
Left Hand: Octave

7.  Eighth+Dotted Eighth= 50 - 108
Right Hand: 6th
Left Hand: Octave

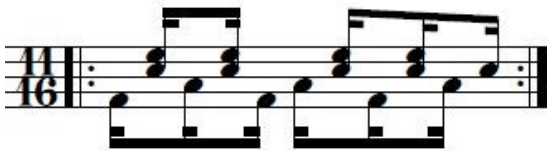
M. 54

8.  Dotted Eighth= 100 - 180
Left Hand: Octave

9.  Dotted Eighth= 90 - 180
Right Hand: 6th
Left Hand: Octave

Strive for even groupings of three 16ths.

Mm. 64-67

10.  Eighth+Dotted Eighth= 80 - 108
Right Hand: 6th
Left Hand: Octave

If your metronome does not have the ability to give a subdivision of five, choose your tempo for the five 16th note grouping and then practice without the metronome to avoid rushing the final, extra note in mallet 3. Another option would be to set your pulse like exercises 8 and 9 with a triplet subdivision and follow each subdivision as an equal 16th note, ignoring the down beat pulses.

Practice Method Recommendations:

1. For further exercises designed to help with the left hand notes of the A Section, refer to Exercises 26-28 of the *Ideo-Kinetics Workbook* by Gordon Stout.
2. When practicing the main theme of mm. 4-6, keep the notes very even. The right hand can add slight dynamic shaping for musicality. Overall, create a connected sound within each measure to give the illusion of a sustained, singing melody over the left hand ostinato.
3. Use exercise 5 to practicing moving your eyes within mm. 26-32 of the B Section. Moving the notes up and down becomes a way to practice maintaining your interval in each hand, which will be vital to note accuracy in this section.
4. When practicing the written notes of mm. 26-32, choose looking points that minimize constant shifting of your eyes back and forth. Whenever possible, focus on the inner two mallets and use peripheral vision for the outside mallets.
5. The double stop chords of mm. 33-35 and 43 create a large visual distance between mallets 2 and 3. To increase accuracy as you move between chords, look at the target note of one inner mallet as you shift. As your hands drop to strike the note, shift your eyes to the other inner mallet, trusting the first mallet to continue falling to the correct note.
6. As you strike the rolled chord from m. 34 into 35, use the method of striking all four notes together and then alternate beginning with the left hand to give the full chord sonority from the moment of attack. This method can be implemented in all Stout pieces.
7. To cleanly attack the chord at the end of m. 35, create a very short separation from the preceding rolled chord.
8. Begin practicing m. 51 with hands separate, like eighth note triplets at a tempo of Quarter= 80 - 110. Then put the hands together as a sextuplet, but start slower at Quarter= 50, eventually working back up to 80 and beyond. To avoid tangling mallets 2 and 3, place mallet 3 closer to the rope nearest to the player, so that mallet 2 crosses above it.
9. After practicing exercises 6 through 9, apply the written notes of mm. 52-54. However, start at a comfortable tempo such as Eighth+Dotted Eighth= 50 and do not rush to increase your tempo until consistency is achieved.
10. If you wish to practice m. 54 separately, begin at a tempo of Dotted Eighth= 90 and gradually increase to 135 to match a comfortable tempo of Eighth+Dotted Eighth= 80 in mm. 52-53.
11. After practicing exercise 10, apply the written notes of m. 64. Practice the physical movements of this measure thoroughly before learning the notes of mm. 65-67.

Mexican Dance No. 2

Mallet Recommendation: All four mallets Md. Hd. - Hd.
Slightly softer than the mallets for Dance No. 1.

Exercises (Grid Notation):

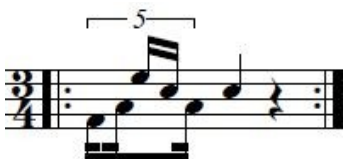
M. 1

1.  Quarter= 110 - 132
Both Hands: 5th

2.  Quarter= 110 - 132
Right Hand: 4th

3.  Quarter= 110 - 132
Right Hand: 4th
Left Hand: 5th

M. 5

4.  Quarter= 100-132
Both Hands: 5th

Keep the hands close together e.g. mallets 2 and 3 share the same note.

5.  Quarter= 100-132
Both Hands: 5th

6.  Quarter= 100-132
Both Hands: 5th

M. 7

7. 

Quarter= 100-132
Left Hand: 5th

8. 

Right Hand: 5th

9. 

Both Hands: 5th
*Eliminate flams between mallets 2 and 3.

10. 

Both Hands: 5th
Then play m. 7 as written.

11. Practice m. 8 hands separate and under tempo at first. Once you begin playing with the hands together, look at your right hand for better accuracy.

12. Polyrhythms of mm. 15-18 and 68-71:

Each polyrhythm contains a standard number of notes per eighth note pulse, plus one more 32nd note. The following is a recommended practice method using **m. 15** as an example.

a. Practice the rhythm with mallets 2 and 3 on one note and the metronome on the eighth note pulse. Begin by taking away one 32nd note to make the rhythm more standard in relation to the pulse.



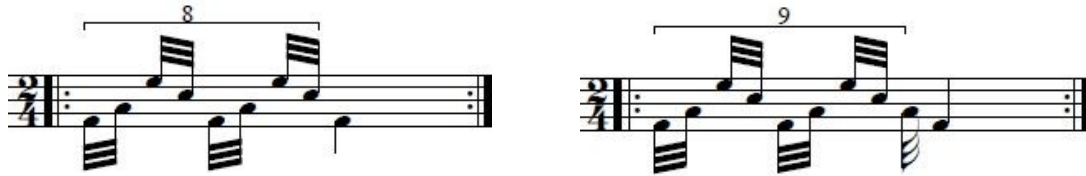
Eighth= 100-132

b. Next, add the extra 32nd note and repeat until the whole grouping sounds even and not broken into uneven smaller groupings.



Eighth= 100-132

c. Next, add a sticking pattern that you would use for the written notes, including double vertical strokes and repeat the same rhythmic progression from steps A and B. Use a generic interval e.g. both hands at a 4th or 5th. Use the tempo of steps A and B .



d. The next exercises are to develop a sticking technique for the first groupings in mm. 15 and 16, but can be used in any other marimba literature where this note progression occurs. In m. 15, it will allow you to execute the 5th and 6th notes (D-E) in the left hand, followed by the 7th and 8th notes (E-D) in the right hand with a solid dynamic.



Each hand plays a double lateral outside stroke at an interval of a 3rd, one octave apart e.g. notes C and E. Eighth= 100-132.


Once this is comfortable, you will keep the 3rd interval in each hand and now play notes that are a 2nd apart. Left hand: C-D, C-D. Right hand: D-C, D-C.

This is accomplished by the same motion of double lateral outside strokes. However, to execute the second note, you will use an “outward swipe” so the inside mallet strikes the note next to the first note and not a full 3rd away. Refer to Figures 1 and 2 in the introduction of this book (pp. 42-43) for further details of the swipe technique. **Take your time** with this technique until it is comfortable and consistent.

Once the outward swipe has achieved consistency, you can make an exercise out of it such as playing these 2nd intervals successively in the same octave (exercise iii) or moving up and down a C scale (exercise iv).



e. The last practice step is to incorporate the previous steps and play the full polyrhythm on a comfortable set of notes. This exercise presents an option for m. 15 in treble clef.

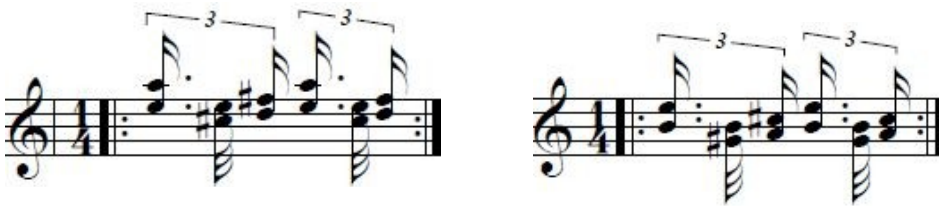


Eighth= 80 - 132

After all the practice steps are accomplished, apply the written notes.

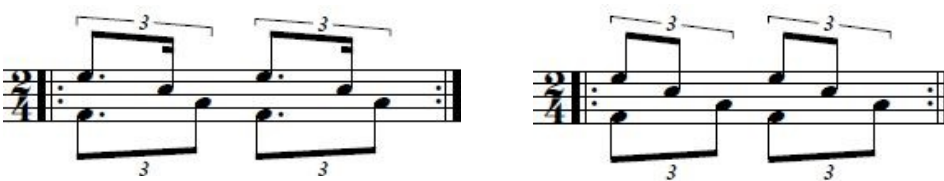
Mm. 17, 19-21 Practice Method (Staff Notation)

13.  Eighth= 80 - 132

14. 

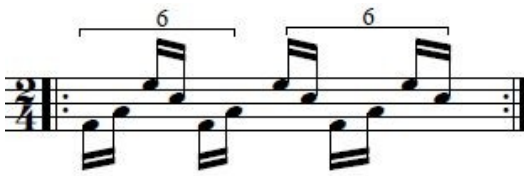
15.  This can be moved up and down the octaves.

Mm. 23-34 (Grid Notation)

16. 

Quarter= 80-112
Both Hands: 5th

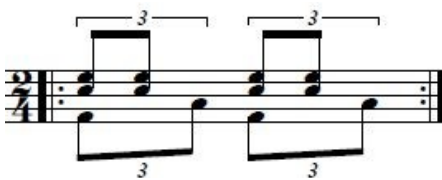
Mm. 39-40

17. 

Quarter= 70 - 86
Both Hands: 5th

To practice the combinations of natural and accidental notes in these measures try moving this rhythm up and down the D major scale with the hands an octave apart.

Mm. 43-52

18. 

Quarter= 70 - 86
Right Hand: 5th or 6th
Left Hand: 6th

Try moving this figure up and down the C scale.

Notes/Recommendations:

1. The composition of this movement began on the vibraphone before moving to the marimba. As a result, the phrase markings of the first 7 measures were originally pedal markings. Try to connect the notes of each measure in one, short, musical phrase instead of separate eighth note pulses.
2. Play m. 3 with the inner two mallets. Start with mallet 2 (LH) and alternate left and right. On the repeat to m.1, look for the A natural in mallet 1 to avoid hitting the note G.
3. After practicing exercises 4-6, apply the written notes for m. 5.
4. Practice mm. 23-35 first as block chords, using the four notes played during each beat to get used to the intervals and arm positioning. When applying the written rhythms in each hand, spread the outer mallets 1 and 4 away from the stationary notes in mallets 2 and 3 as the interval in each hand reaches an octave every two measures. Avoid shifting your arms between the two notes as this will decrease accuracy.
5. When playing mm. 23-35 as written, keep your eyes focused on mallets 2 and 3 as much as possible. Look for outer notes when needed, but always return your eyes to the center. Also be sure to differentiate between the beats with a standard triplet rhythm and those with the dotted eighth-sixteenth-eighth rhythm. Learn them correctly the first time to avoid fixing it later.
6. To reach the interval of a ninth in the left hand in m. 50, the player can either keep mallet 1 stationary and work on reaching this distance or apply the ideo-kinetic method preferred by Stout. This involves holding a smaller interval in the left hand and shifting your arm between the notes while playing single alternating strokes and focusing your eyes on the inner mallets. The author recommends the arm shift method.
7. After practicing exercise 18, learn this section with the written notes:
 - a. LH alone
 - b. RH alone
 - c. Both hands in block chords
 - d. Both hands as written

When playing both hands as written, play it slowly and focus on mallets 2 and 3.

Etudes for Marimba Book 2 (1975)

Background Information:

The second book of etudes was written with more focus on developing formal structures than on specific technical challenges. *Etude 6* was the first chorale piece Stout had written since composing *Elegy* and *Reverie* in high school. *Etude 7* is a study in glissando technique. *Etude 8* was dedicated to marimbist Keiko Abe and was Stout's first attempt at writing in a theme and variations style. The dynamic effects and tonalities were inspired by the solo marimba works of Japanese composers in the 1960s such as *Time*, *Mirage*, and *Torse III*. Abe's many solo performances brought these pieces to prominence in the repertoire. *Etude 9* was inspired by rhythmic figures used in jazz on both drumset and melodic instruments. *Etude 10* began as an assignment in 12-tone composition during his senior year of college. After an opening section, the piece breaks away from the strict rules of this compositional method. Although this collection was completed in 1975, it was begun in 1974 before the *Mexican Dances*, since the first *Mexican Dance* was originally the ninth etude.

*All of the following exercises are shown without time signatures to mirror the absence of time signatures in the written score.

Range: 4 octave marimba

Publisher: Studio 4 Productions/KPP (www.mostlymarimba.com).

Recorded: (Etudes 6 and 9) "Gordon Stout: Music for Solo Marimba".

Etude 6

Mallet Recommendation: All four mallets Md. Sft.

Exercises (Grid Notation):



Since this etude is rolled throughout, warm up with alternating double vertical strokes at intervals of a 5th, octave, 9th, and 10th.

Outer Sections, mm.1-19 and 49-67 (Staff Notation)

2.

3.

All notes in exercises 2 and 3 should be connected smoothly. Play these exercises at a tempo of Quarter= 60. Make decisions about where to look as the notes change. These decisions will prepare you for the contrary motion of the written notes in these sections. To approximate the written notes, the moving inner or outer mallets can incorporate small leaps such as playing arpeggios or pentatonic scales.

Notes/Recommendations:

1. The hands must remain relaxed throughout to avoid fatigue from continuous rolling.
2. This piece offers the player the chance to experiment with roll speed. Stout makes indications of slow, normal, and fast to create different levels of intensity. The player should explore beyond these written indicators to add their own musicality to the similar first and last sections of the piece.
3. Depending on the hardness of the chosen mallets, the player will need to listen for dynamic balance between the four mallets. With softer mallets, they will typically not speak as well in the upper register. Right hand notes in this register will need to be played with a greater stick height to balance with the lower, right hand notes.
4. As it was noted in the recommendations for *Etude 1*, all 2, 3, and 4 note chords that receive a fresh attack should begin with all notes struck simultaneously and then continuing with hands alternating in the style of a traditional roll. After the first attack, the next stroke should be in the left hand, as it would be if the roll had begun with the right hand alone.
5. In mm. 28-30, give a noticeable emphasis to the left hand notes with a marking of *sfp* and a tenuto accent.
6. Practice mm. 36-41 in Letter B as un-rolled block chords to initially make decisions on where to look during note changes for accuracy.
7. Perform the glissando from m. 40 into 41 by continuing to play an alternating roll as the mallets move from the first chord to the second chord.

Etude 7

Mallet Recommendation: All four mallets Md. - Md. Sft.

Exercises (Staff Notation):

1. Eighth= 132 - 152

Play the up stem notes with mallet 3 and the down stem notes with mallet 2.

Mm. 6-7

2. Eighth= 110 - 132
Use mallets 2 and 3.

After attacking the first note in each hand and playing the glissando, create a very small separation before attacking the next note. For this exercise, look for the lower F as you gliss. As you are about to attack the F, shift your eyes up to the high A, trusting mallet 2 to continue its path to the F. This will ensure the accuracy of both notes.

Mm. 14-15

3. Eighth= 120 - 152

Create a small separation between the left hand gliss and the four-note chord.

M. 18 (Grid Notation)

4. Eighth= 132 - 152
Right Hand: Octave
Left Hand: 5th

Notes/Recommendations:

1. Note that Stout's sticking suggestions are listed as mallets 1-4 from **right to left**.
2. With the exception of mm. 11, 13, 16, and 20, all notes with stems pointing up are to be played by the right hand and notes with stems down are to be played by the left hand.
3. Notes in the top, treble clef staff are to be played by the right hand and notes in the bottom, bass clef staff are to be played by the left hand. The few exceptions are the single line, non-sliding notes of mm. 11, 13, 16, and 20 and the four-note, rolled chord of m. 27.
4. The speed of each glissando is to be determined by the written rhythm. Longer note lengths will necessitate a slower gliss and shorter note lengths will need a faster gliss.
5. When both hands play a single note glissando at the same time, the same mallet should be used in each hand for attacking the next note. For example, in m. 6, mallets 2 and 3 are used to attack the notes E and G and gliss away from each other. These same two mallets should be used to attack the next notes (C and Eb) that are over three octaves apart and gliss back towards each other. To achieve this, each mallet should execute a quick lift/separation from the gliss to cleanly attack the next note (as mentioned in exercise 2). If it is timed properly, there should not be a noticeable gap between the gliss and the attack of the new note.
6. Similar to exercise 2, to accurately strike the C and Eb of mm. 6-7 which are over three octaves apart, look for the low C. In the moment that the mallets move to strike, quickly shift your eyes to the high Eb, allowing the left hand to continue on its path to the low C.
7. In m. 13, the sticking of the five 16th notes should be 323-22. The double left will allow a comfortable attack of the down beat of m. 14, which is a two-note double vertical stroke in the right hand. To play the C#-D#-C# in m. 13, play the C# in the center of the bar and the D# on the edge to avoid a mallet shaft crossing.
8. The **only** time that a glissando moves across the accidental notes is in m. 27. Since the spaces between some notes make it very hard to drag the mallets continually, Stout notates a stem with three slashes, indicating a traditional roll. Play a hand-to-hand roll, moving the left hand up the accidental notes and the right hand up the natural notes.

Etude 8

Mallet Recommendation: All four mallets Md. - Md. Hd. Two-tone mallets could be an option for the contrast between rolls and fast, articulate passages.

Exercises (Grid Notation):



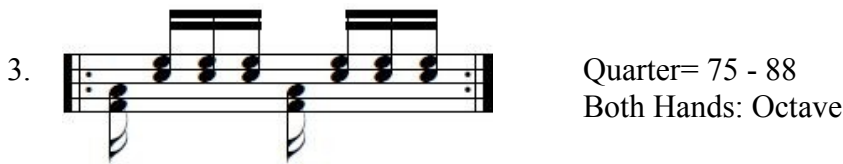
Alternating double vertical strokes at a 5th and an octave will build endurance for rolls and fast, repeated double stops in Variation 4 (mm. 80-107).

Mm. 22 and 24



Play scales in the keys of C, D, and E major. Practice the scales looking at your left hand and then looking at your right hand.

Mm. 23 and 25-27




Mm. 33 and 44-45 (Staff Notation)

Arpeggios and octave leaps in double vertical strokes one hand at a time.



Mm. 35-42


Connected, leaping rolls.

6.  Use mallets 2 and 3.

When making leaps larger than an octave, change notes leading with the outside mallet closest to the target note.

When moving up/to the right:

When moving down/to the left:

7. 


Variation 4 (mm. 80-107) (Grid Notation)

The notation in the score of stems without note heads between each chord change is meant to be played as continuous double stops in both hands. It is not a short hand form of alternating 16th or 32nd notes.

8.  Quarter= 70 - 80
Both Hands: 4th, 5th, and 6th

To reduce hand fatigue, try using a rebounding motion similar to the “Moeller” technique for snare drum. In this case, it involves making each group of four 16th notes one arm motion. The wrist and arm initiate the down stroke of the first note. The next three notes come from the wrist as the arm is lifting up to prepare for the next down beat. This will keep the wrist from having to hammer out every note.

Mm. 104-107

9.  Quarter= 70 - 80
Right Hand: Octave
Left Hand: 5th

All stems are in the same direction for rhythmic clarity.

Notes/Recommendations:

1. The numerous instances of double stop chords that occur after a moving line of notes should be practiced slowly to avoid flams. Gradually increase the tempo while always striving for clean attacks.
2. In mm. 26-27, play the octave B naturals on the outside edges of the bars (closest to the player) to avoid mallet crossing.
3. As the four mallet chords move up and down the keyboard in mm. 28-34, look at mallets 2 and 3, using peripheral vision for the outer notes. The transitions for these chords can initially be practiced at un-rolled block chords to gain muscle memory of the interval changes.
4. The left hand grace notes in m. 43 are to be played as one double vertical stroke followed by the written rhythm in the right hand notes (16th-8th). These beats should not be interpreted as a 4 note rolled (chord) attack.
5. To execute the final note in m. 58, create a quick release from the preceding roll and play the double vertical stroke grace notes with the right hand on the outside edges of the bars and the final stroke with the left hand in the center of the bars to avoid mallet crossing.

Etude 9


Mallet Recommendation: All four mallets Md. Hd.

Exercises (Grid Notation):

Mm. 1-5

1.  Eighth= 110 - 132
Right Hand: Octave
Left Hand: 7th


Mm. 24, 26-27

2.  Quarter= 100 - 120
Both Hands: 4th

M. 37

3.  Quarter= 90 - 120
Right Hand: 7th
Left Hand: Octave

M. 48

4.  Quarter= 120 - 180
(Printed notes are 32nds)
Right Hand: 5th
Left Hand: Octave

Notes/Recommendations:


1. In mm. 1-5, bring out the down beats in mallet 1 as this is the moving melody.
2. To execute the notes in m. 22, set the left hand over the notes G and E during the preceding 8th and 16th rests so you can look at the right hand notes that are an octave above.
3. Bring out the left hand in mm. 24-28. The right hand acts as a moving chordal accompaniment. Strive for a connected sound in the right hand to avoid making the section sound too mechanical.
4. Notice that the first three notes of m. 34 are a quarter note triplet and not traditional quarter notes.
5. Focus on mallets 2 and 3 during mm. 38-40 for accuracy.
6. In mm. 45-49, use the notation of stems up and down to guide your choice of which hand plays particular notes. However, choose a specific sticking pattern that allows you to execute this 32nd note passage fast enough.

Etude 10

Mallet Recommendation: All four mallets Md. Hd. - Hd.

Exercises (Grid Notation):


Mm. 5 and 8-9

1.  Quarter= 100 - 120
Right Hand: Octave
Left Hand: 5th

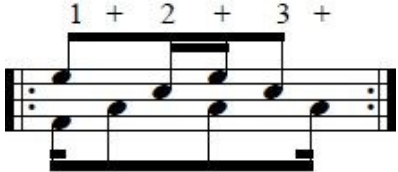
M. 10

2.  Quarter= 100 - 120
Right Hand: 5th

M. 20

3.  Quarter= 110 - 120
Both Hands: 5th

M. 47

4.  Eighth= 120 - 144
Right Hand: 5th
Left Hand: 3rd

Notes/Recommendations:

1. The challenge throughout the piece is deciding where to look for note accuracy. In the outer A sections of the piece (mm. 1-24 and 49-69), the hands tend to alternate moving to a new note or set of notes. In these cases, the eyes can follow the moving hand in each moment. During the inner sections, the player can focus mostly in between the two hands.
2. To accurately strike the double stop chord in m. 37, look towards the note A as you are playing the four 16th notes that precede the double stop. As your hands shift to strike the chord, move your eyes to the Ab that will be struck by mallet 3. It is easier to trust the C#-A in the left hand using peripheral vision as the left hand is holding the same interval in the preceding interval of G-D#.
3. In mm. 43-44 the second note of beat 1 in each measure creates a large interval of G# and B between the hands. Look for mallet 4 striking the upper B since mallet 2 only moves a whole step from F# to G#.

Astral Dance (1979)

Background Information:

This challenging work is based on a single theme and its variations. Stout often performs this work with the *Two Mexican Dances* as a set titled "Three Dances for Marimba". It is a marimba dance in his mind because it combines melody and harmony through the rhythmic alternation of the two hands. Stout could not determine a nationality for the piece, as Warren Benson did with the *Two Mexican Dances*, so the word "astral" implies "of a different world."

Range: 4 octave marimba. Newer printings have an optional ending for 5 octaves.

Publisher: Studio 4 Productions/KPP (www.mostlymarimba.com)

Recorded: Astral Projections CD. Resonator Records (www.mostlymarimba.com).

Mallet Recommendation: 1 2 3 4
Md. Sft. Md. Hd. Md. Hd. Md. Hd.

Exercises (Grid Notation):

All 16th notes are equal. Groups of three notes should not be felt as triplets in relation to the 8th note pulse, except in the case of Exercise 6.

Beginning to Letter A

1.

Eighth= 105-215

Both Hands: Octave

2.

3.

Bring out the tenuto markings on the 1st and 9th notes of each measure.

Letter A (mm. 21-39)

4.

Eighth= 105-215
Right Hand: 5th
Left Hand: Octave

Rubato (m. 45)

5.

Holding a 5th between mallets 2 & 3.
Play as three descending notes e.g.
Left- E-D-C Right- G-F-E

6.

Both Hands: 5th

Letter C (mm. 50-60)

7.

Eighth= 105-215
Right Hand: Octave double stops
Left Hand: 5th

Mm. 61-69

8.

Eighth= 105-215
Right Hand: Octave double stops
Left Hand: 5th

Letter D

9.

Right Hand: Octave, Left Hand: 5th
Similar to Exercise 3 with right hand double stops at an octave.

Mm. 83-93

10.  Eighth= 105-215
Both Hands: Octave

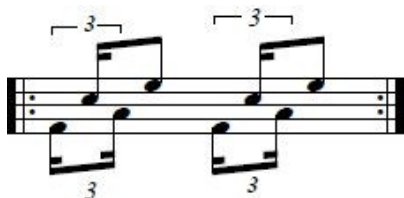
Letter F

11. 

Eighth= 105-190
Right Hand: Octave Left Hand: 5th

Mm. 107- End

12.  Eighth= 105-190
Right Hand: 5th
Left Hand: Octave

13.  Eighth= 120-170
Both Hands: Octave

Notes/Recommendations

1. When playing the opening section up to Letter A, it has become common for players, including Stout, to play this section down 1 octave. At Letter A, play the notes in the written octave.
2. From the beginning to Letter B look at the inner mallets; more importantly, look at the inner mallet of the hand that is moving the chordal 6th interval.
Top to A- mallet 3 A to B- mallet 2
Notice how this inner mallet always moves up or down a *major 3rd*. By focusing on where the 6th interval hand is going, you are less likely to over-think the “order” of which mallet is striking in the moving octave hand. This is especially helpful from Letters A to B.
3. From mm. 41-42 play the octave E naturals in the right hand (mallets 3&4) towards the bottom ropes and the octave C naturals with the left hand towards the top rope to avoid the hands colliding (see Figures 9 and 10).

Figure 9- Right hand E naturals



Figure 10- Left hand C naturals



4. To strike the high A natural in m. 42 accurately, watch mallet 3 land directly over the lower A before striking the higher note to avoid not reaching far enough.
5. In m. 109 strike the Eb-C nat. double stop with the right hand (mallets 3&4) to avoid flams. Additionally, strike the last C# in the measure with mallet 1 while already shifting your body towards the top octave for the next high F#.
6. During the entire last page, as you quickly shift between the upper and lower register, stay light on your feet and do not stomp on the beat. Try to shift left to right with one step and avoid dragging your feet across the floor as you do this.

Four Episodes (1994-95)

Background Information:

Each of the *Four Episodes* represents a different musical style. The first episode was a reworking of previously composed material. The second episode was intended to pay homage to Paul Smadbeck's *Rhythm Song* for solo marimba. The third episode reminded Stout of Chick Corea's *Children's Songs*, which he had enjoyed and played years earlier as vibraphone and marimba duets. The fourth episode did not have a particular inspiration. The four separate pieces were completed independently of each other before Stout decided to combine and name them *Four Episodes*. Each piece presents particular challenges in sticking and rhythmic independence between the hands.

The author recommends listen to Stout's performances on his album "Astral Projections" to observe spots in *Episodes 2-4* where he improvises, deviating from the written notes.

Notation: Each of the *Four Episodes* is notated without time signatures to focus on note groupings and phrasing. In the exercises for *Episode 1 and 2*, time signatures have also been omitted but the given pulse of quarter note, eighth note, etc. remains constant.

Groups of three eighth notes should not be felt as triplets in relation to the pulse except where a proper triplet bracket has been notated.

Range: Episodes 1-3 require a 4.5 octave (low F) marimba.

Episode 4 requires a 5 octave marimba.

Publisher: Studio 4 Productions/KPP (www.mostlymarimba.com).

Recorded: "Astral Projections", Resonator Records (www.mostlymarimba.com).

Episode 1

Mallet Recommendation: 1 2 3 4
 Md. Md. Hd. Md. Hd. Md. Hd.

Exercises (Grid Notation):

*Avoid flams on the attacks of any double stops (right and left hand striking together) which are preceded by single independent or single alternating strokes.

M. 2

1. Quarter= 140 - 160 plus eighth note
Right Hand: 4th
Left Hand: 6th

M. 3

2. Quarter= 140 - 160 plus eighth note
Right Hand: 4th
Left Hand: 5th

Mm. 23-24

3.

Quarter= 120 - 160,
plus eighth note
Both Hands: 4th

Mm. 25-26

4.

Quarter= 130 - 160,
plus eighth note
Right Hand: 4th
Left Hand: 6th

M. 28

5.

Quarter= 130 - 160 plus eighth note
Both Hands: 5th

Mm. 29-30

6.

Quarter= 130 - 160
plus eighth note
Both Hands: 5th

Mm. 31-32

7.

Quarter= 120 - 160 plus eighth note
Right Hand: 4th
Left Hand: 6th

Try the left hand alone at first in a 6th or 7th interval:

Mm. 33-34

8. 

Quarter= 120 - 160
Right Hand: 4th
Left Hand: 3rd

Notes/Recommendations:

1. Keep the eighth note pulse constant throughout the piece for rhythmic accuracy.
2. Take special note of places where eighth note groupings follow real triplets such as measure 24, which is represented in exercise 3.
3. Keeping with the tradition of Stout's other works, any 3 or 4 note rolled chords that receive a fresh attack should begin with all notes struck simultaneously and then continuing with hands alternating in the style of a traditional roll.
4. The rhythms of mm. 6, 8, 25, and 27 are often misinterpreted. When a written quarter note is followed by an eighth note with a stem in the opposite direction, it does **not** mean that the quarter note gets its full value before attacking the following eighth note. Exercise 4 shows the suggested sticking pattern with the composite rhythm of m. 25 as it should be interpreted. Notice that if the measures had time signatures, it would be in 11/8. The following examples show the composite rhythms of mm. 6 and 8 as they should be played rhythmically.

M. 6



M. 8




Episode 2

Mallet Recommendation: All four mallets Md.

Exercises (Grid Notation):

Mm. 1-4

1.  Quarter= 170 - 200
Both Hands: 5th

2. 

Mm. 5-6

3.  Quarter= 170 - 200
Right Hand: 4th and 5th
Left Hand: Octave

Mm. 7-9

4.  Quarter= 150 - 200 plus eighth note
Right Hand: 5th
Left Hand: Octave

Mm. 10-13

5. 

Quarter= 170 - 200 plus eighth note
Both Hands: 6th

Mm. 14-15

6.  Quarter= 160 - 200
Right Hand: 6th

The left hand can play any note or hold an octave interval as it would in preparation for mm. 16-23.

Mm. 16-23

7.  Quarter= 150 - 200
Right Hand: 3rd and 6th
Left Hand: Octave

M. 36

8.  Quarter= 140 - 200
Right Hand: 5th
Left Hand: 4th

M. 82

9. 

Quarter= 140 - 200 plus eighth note
Right Hand: 3rd
Left Hand: 3rd and Octave

To prepare for the written notes, the player may begin this exercise with the left hand at an octave and switch to a 3rd after the first two eighth notes.

Notes/Recommendations:

1. Note that Stout's sticking recommendations are notated as 1-4 from left to right.
2. The note B in the bass clef staff at the end of m. 11 is missing a flat symbol (*b*). This note should be Bb as it will be at the end of m. 13.
3. When solidifying the memorization of the written notes in sections such as mm. 14-27, it is recommended to practice the hands separately.
4. When learning the written notes for mm. 38-45, it is recommended to practice the left hand notes alone. Specifically, this is to work on the interval of a 10th found in mm. 40 and 42. Hold an interval of an octave in the left hand and move between the F and Ab using an arm shift that employs a double lateral stroke from the Ab in mallet 2 to the F in mallet 1. (Refer to pp. 45-46 and figures 4-6 of the introduction for further explanation of the shift technique.) This method of shifting between intervals greater than an octave may be used for the left hand notes in mm. 7-9 and 73-91.
5. In mm. 52-57, choosing where to look is the key to accuracy. It is a series of four chords (one more than their first appearance at m. 28). Looking at mallet 3 or slightly to the left of mallet 3 on each chord will give the best accuracy, using peripheral vision to judge the location of notes in the left hand.


Episode 3

Mallet Recommendation: 1 2 3 4
 Md. Md. Hd. Md. Hd. Md. Hd.

Exercises (Staff Notation):

These exercises use scale warm ups with varying left hand ostinatos to develop the independence needed to perform this movement.

Mm. 1-3

1.  Quarter= 90 - 116
 Also play the right hand part with mallet 4.

2.  Quarter= 90 - 116

3. 

Also try exercises 1-3 with this bass pattern:

4. 

5. Quarter= 90 - 116

M. 4-5

6.

Mm. 12-14

7.

Mm. 16-19

8. Also play the right hand part with mallet 4.

9.

Also try the exercise 9 pattern on a B minor scale using this bass pattern:



Notes/Recommendations:

1. These exercises should be used with the goal of gaining independence from focusing on the left hand. When the written notes are applied, the player should be able to, through repetition, use the ideo-kinetic concepts of muscle memory and peripheral vision to confidently play the left hand notes while focusing their eyes on the right hand notes. This will be important for accuracy since the right hand is an octave or more above the left hand for most of the ostinato sections.
2. Another useful technique during the process of learning the written notes is to practice the ostinato sections with the hands separate.
3. In m. 4, eighth note number 7 in the right hand is misprinted as an F#. It should be G# as it is a repeat of eighth note number 2. The repeat of these notes in m. 5 confirms this mistake.
4. A smart choice in sticking must be made to play the three note chord on the down beat of m. 23 before the Da Capo without a flam. The author recommends:
 - a. Play the four 16th notes preceding this chord with a sticking of 2324.
 - b. As you attack the chord; move your eyes to the low B natural, striking it with mallet 1.
5. Over the course of many performances, Stout has found spots to improvise on the written notes. As mentioned in the background information for *Four Episodes*, listen to his recorded performance of *Episode 3* on the album “Astral Projections” as a reference. On this recording, he improvises an arpeggio on the final B minor chord. Experiment with ways to do this if you choose. One benefit of playing the arpeggio is to avoid the possibility of a flam when trying to strike the four note chord after the hand-to-hand triplet 16th rhythm that precedes it.

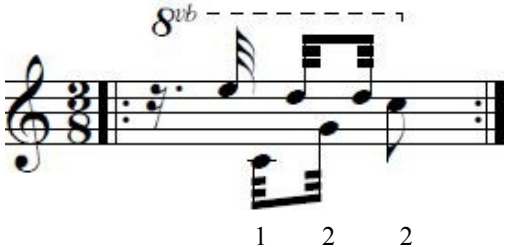
Episode 4

Mallet Recommendation: 1 2 3 4
 Md. Hd. Hd. Hd. Hd.

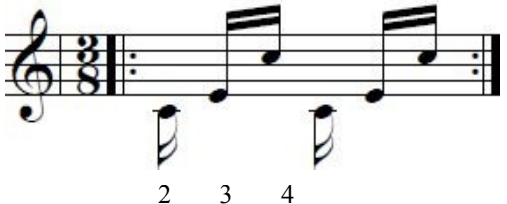
Exercises (Staff Notation):

These exercises contain time signatures for rhythmic clarity.


M. 1

1.  Eighth= 130 - 184

Mm. 4 and 7

2.  Eighth= 140 - 184

M. 8

3. 

Try this pattern as a descending scale:

4.  etc.

Mm. 13-18

Play a descending scale with this pattern:

5.  etc.

M. 21

6.  Eighth= 150 - 184


M. 23

7. 

M. 25

8.  Eighth= 130 - 184

M. 28

9.  Dotted Eighth= 110 - 120

Notes/Recommendations:

1. During the last eighth note of m. 10, the C# and D# notes should be played on the edges of the bars in a 2323 sticking to shorten the distance that the right hand travels to attack the double vertical stroke on the downbeat of m. 11.
2. In mm. 11-12, decisions on where to look will aid note accuracy. During m. 11, look center, between mallets 2 and 3. In m. 12, the player should shift their eyes to the following spots/notes as they are about to strike each downbeat:
 - Beat 1- mallet 2 (A)
 - Beat 2- right hand
 - Beat 3- left hand
 - Beat 4- mallet 3 (A#)
3. To avoid a mallet shaft cross on beat 4 of m. 11, play the right hand C# and A# in the center of the bars and the left hand Eb on the edge of the bar.
4. Exercise 7 is designed as an initial preparation for playing the notes in m. 23. The written notes on beats 1 and 3 are a 2nd interval (C#-D#) played by mallets 3 and 4. As shown in exercise 7, the right hand will hold an interval of a 3rd and play these two notes using an “inward swipe” motion with mallet 3 playing C# and mallet 4 playing D#. An “outward swipe” will be used for the reverse order of these notes (D#-C#) found in m. 24. Each motion involves a double lateral inside or outside stroke respectively. For a full explanation of the swipe technique, refer to the **Arm Motion Terminology** section and Figures 1 and 2 of the introduction to this book (pp. 42-43).
5. In mm. 25-33, carefully memorize which beats have groupings of three 16th notes and which beats have true 16th note triplets.
6. Mm. 34-38 require sticking choices that will create the greatest ease of motion up and down the keyboard. The author recommends this sticking pattern for mm. 34-35 shown in grid notation:



Sedimental Structures (1998)

Background Information:

This work was commissioned by and written for marimbist Robert Van Sice. The entire piece is developed from the material in the first measure. Some ideas came from stacking different combinations of notes from this measure and others came from improvising by ear in a more organic way. The piece has four main structural sections:

Section I- mm. 1-48

Section II- mm. 49-110

Section III- mm. 111-151

Section IV- mm. 152- 220

Stout felt that the piece had an earthy quality with its use of the lower range of the marimba and its general sound character, which led to the use of the word “sedimental” in the title.

Range: 5 octave marimba

Publisher: KPP (www.mostlymarimba.com).

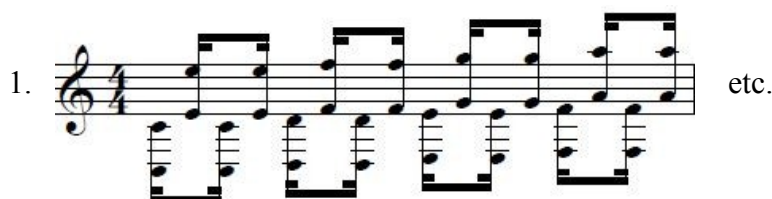
Recorded: "Astral Projections", Resonator Records (www.mostlymarimba.com).

Mallet Recommendation: All four mallets Md. Hd.

Exercises:

General Warm Up (Staff Notation)

Play alternating double vertical strokes in octaves to prepare for the numerous large intervals. Move the octaves up and down the C scale on the same notes or offset in thirds:

1. 

2. Play the OILR warm up with octaves in each hand. Refer to p. 48 of the introduction.

M. 1 (Grid Notation)

3.  Quarter= 90 - 140
Both Hands: 5th

Mm. 5-6



Quarter= 90 - 140 plus eighth note
Both Hands: 5th
Also try RH: Octave

M. 11 (Staff Notation)

Play a descending C scale with mallets 2 and 3 an octave apart.
Focus your eyes between the two mallets, but more towards the left side.



etc. Quarter= 80 - 100

Also practice this with mallets 1 and 3, as well as increasing the interval to an octave and a 3rd or an octave and a 5th.

Mm. 18 and 20 (Grid Notation)

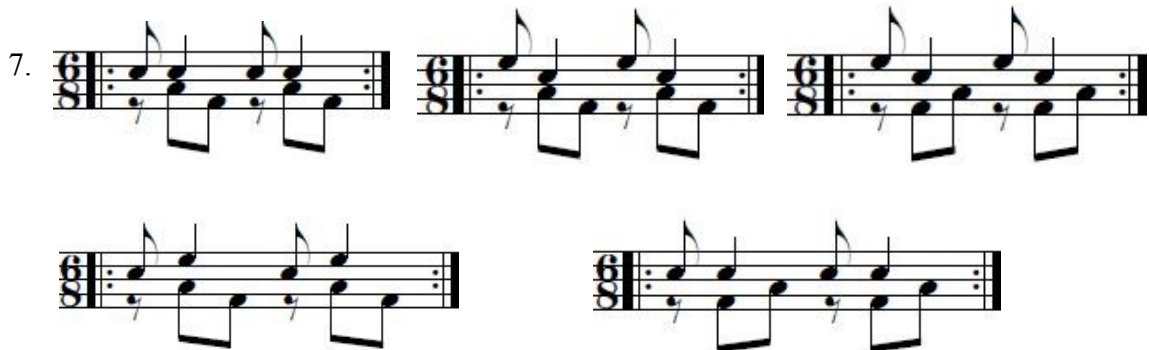


Dotted Quarter= 60 - 90
Both Hands: Octave


M. 20 simply reverses the sticking pattern: 423142.

Mm. 35-37

Dotted Quarter= 70 - 90 Both Hands: 5th



M. 39

8. 

Quarter= 120 - 140
Right Hand: 5th
Left Hand: Octave

Mm. 64-67, 80-85, and 90-93

9. 

Quarter= 140 - 200
plus eighth note
Both Hands: 5th

10. 

11. 

Mm. 86-89

12. 

Dotted Quarter= 90 - 130
Both Hands: Octave

Mm. 95 and 98

13. 

Quarter= 120 - 200
Both Hands: Octave

Avoid flams on the down beats.

Mm. 106-108

14. 

Quarter= 120 - 140
Right Hand: 7th
Left Hand: 6th

Mm. 121-122 (Staff Notation)

15.  Quarter= 60 - 70

This exercise will prepare you for the three-note rolled chords with one hand making large leaps up and down the bottom two octaves of the keyboard.

*The hands and octaves can also be reversed to prepare for mm. 127-128.


Letter C (Mm. 129-131)

After choosing your sticking patterns for the accelerating runs, practice them with both hands in a 5th.

M. 131 (first three beats) (Grid Notation)

16.  Quarter= 60
Right Hand: 5th
Left Hand: Octave

Mm. 132 and 149-151

17.  Quarter= 50 - 60
a) Right Hand: 4th, Left Hand: Octave
b) Right Hand: Octave, Left Hand: 6th


18.  Quarter= 60 - 92
Both Hands: 6th

After applying the written notes of mm. 149-151, be able to achieve the quarter note tempo of 92 so that the tempo transition into Letter E is a simple double time, where the eighth note of 92bpm now becomes the quarter note at 184bpm.

Letter E

19.  Quarter= 160 - 184
Right Hand: 4th
Left Hand: Octave

M. 157

20.  Dotted Quarter= 100 - 130
Both Hands: 3rd

Mm. 160-161

21.  Quarter= 160 - 184
plus eighth note
Right Hand: 4th
Left Hand: 5th


Mm. 163-164

22.  Quarter= 160 - 184 plus eighth
Right Hand: Octave
Left Hand: 3rd

M. 174

23.  Quarter= 120 - 184
Right Hand: 4th
Left Hand: 5th

M. 176

24.  Quarter= 130 - 184
Both Hands: Octave

M. 181-196 (DANCE!)

25.  Quarter= 150 - 184,
plus eighth note
Both Hands: 6th

M. 185


26.  Quarter= 150 - 184 plus eighth note
Right Hand: 5th
Left Hand: 3rd

When going from the single note on mallet 1 to the double vertical on mallets 1 and 2, avoid flams. Practicing hands separate at first will help.

Mm. 198 and 202

27.  Quarter= 140 - 184
Both Hands: Octave

Mm. 204

28.  Quarter= 140 - 184
Right Hand: 6th
Left Hand: 3rd

Mm. 206-209

29.  Quarter= 120 - 184,
plus eighth note
Right Hand: 6th
Left Hand: 3rd

Notes/Recommendations:

1. The numerous exercises presented for this piece follow the author's philosophy of breaking down any challenging technical passages of a piece to their basic sticking patterns using comfortable intervals in each hand. Repeat each pattern with the metronome at a manageable tempo, gradually increasing to the written performance tempo. Next, decrease your tempo again and play the written notes. Gradually increase your tempo with the written notes, always focusing on consistency and incorporating musical aspects of dynamics and phrasing.
2. As suggested in exercise 5, focus your eyes on the inner mallets in m. 11, but more towards the left as the notes descend.
3. In m. 50, the second note C is also C# despite being on the upper staff.
4. Warm up an interval of a 10th in each hand using double vertical strokes to prepare for the rolls in mm. 138 and 144.
5. Note that the suggested stickings in the score are numbered 1-4 from Left to Right, unlike the reverse order used at the time of *Etude Book 1*.

Rumble Strips (2000)

Background Information:

This work was written specifically for the recording of Stout's album *Astral Projections*. It is meant to depict the warning grooves or bumps on the sides of roadways that cause an unexpected and sudden rumble when driven over in a car. These rumble strips are depicted musically throughout by driving rhythms of triplets and 16th notes with varying accents and more use of the lower range of a 5 octave marimba. The piece is dedicated to Matthias Schmitt, whom Stout admired as a composer and had met in person prior to beginning composition. The dedication was a result of Stout feeling that the rhythmic aspect of mm. 66-69 in Mvt. II reminded him of Schmitt's piece *Ghanaia* for marimba.

Range: 5 octave marimba

Publisher: KPP (www.mostlymarimba.com).

Recorded: "Astral Projections", Resonator Records (www.mostlymarimba.com).

"Snapshots", She-e Wu, Resonator Records.


Mallet Recommendation: 1 2 3 4
 Md. Md. Hd. Md. Hd. Md. Hd.


If the player chooses to switch mallets for Mvt. II, use a set that is one step harder than those used Mvt. I.


Exercises (Grid Notation):

Movement I

Mm. 2, 3, and 7

- 

Dotted Quarter= 90 - 104
Right Hand: 3rd and 4th
Left Hand: 5th
- 

Right Hand: 3rd and Octave
Left Hand: 5th
- 

Quarter= 120 - 160
Both Hands: 5th

M. 17

4.  Quarter= 100 - 160
Both Hands: 5th

M. 30

5.  Quarter= 120 - 160
Right Hand: 5th

Mm. 49-52 and 60-63 (Staff Notation)

6.  Quarter= 60 - 80

7. 

These exercises will prepare you for the moving right hand in the three-note chords.

Mm. 64-67

8. 

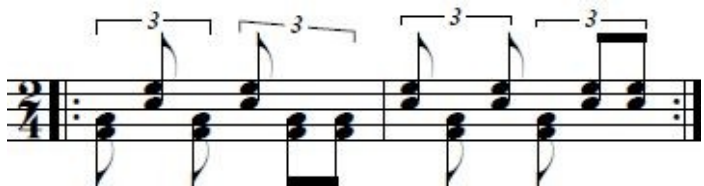
Quarter= 100 - 160
Both Hands: 5th

Movement II

M. 1

6.  Quarter= 110 - 132
Both Hands: 5th

Mm. 10 and 132

7.  Quarter= 100 - 132
Both Hands: 5th

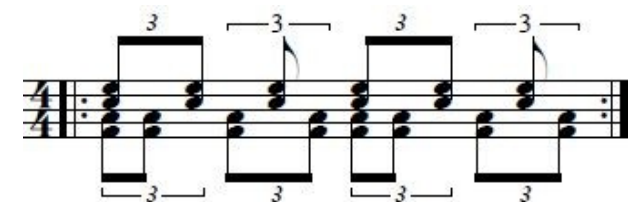
The exercise is a left hand lead Double Paradiddle. Avoid flams within each hand. Stay relaxed and use more wrist motion than arm motion.

8. The passage at m. 55 can also be warmed up by using exercise 4.

Mm. 64-65

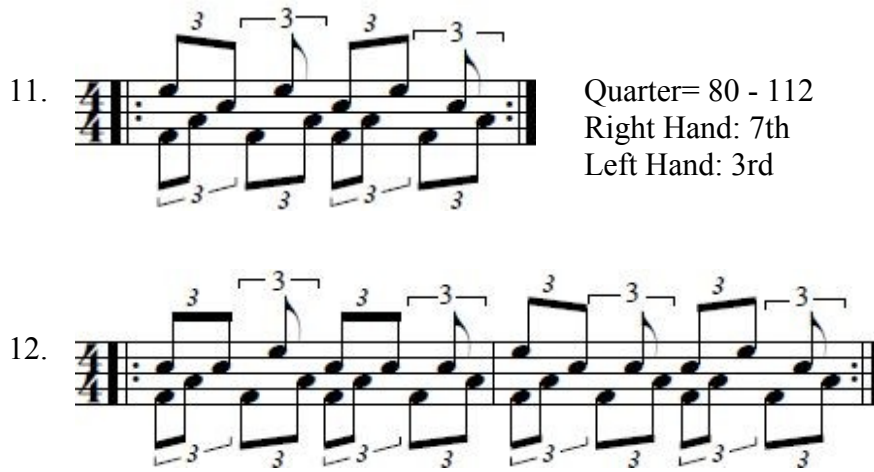
9.  Quarter= 90 - 128
Both Hands: 5th


Mm. 67 and 78

10.  Quarter= 90 - 140
Both Hands: 5th

Measure 67 begins the sticking pattern on beat 2 of the pattern shown above and will be played at the top of the suggested tempo range. Measure 78 is slower, with a goal tempo of 112 bpm and begins as notated above.

Mm. 88 and 92-93

11.  Quarter= 80 - 112
Right Hand: 7th
Left Hand: 3rd

12. 

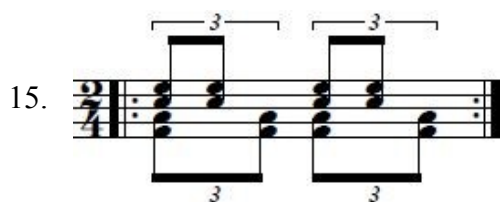
M. 96

13.  Quarter= 80 - 120
Right Hand: 5th
Left Hand: 3rd

Mm. 110-114

14.  Quarter= 110 - 132
Both Hands: 5th

Mm. 115-121

15.  Quarter= 110 - 132
Both Hands: 5th

The exercise is a Swiss Army Triplet rudiment with flat flams and leading with the right hand.

M. 131



Quarter= 110 - 140
Both Hands: 5th

Notes/Recommendations:

Movement I

1. Mm. 1-15 contain repeated moments of mallet crossing between the left and right hands. In mm. 3-4 and 12-13, this crossing can be solved by playing the right hand natural notes on the outside edges of the bars as you would on the edges of accidental notes.
2. Notice the plus sign (+) marking above certain notes. This indicates a “dead stroke” which is a down stroke played without rebound and the mallet head is pressed into the bar to deaden or choke the natural resonance.
3. The bracketed eighth note triplets in mm. 7-10 and similar spots should be rhythmically accurate and therefore sound slightly faster than the steady eighth notes in the surrounding measures. Do not allow them to sound like a continuation of the regular groupings of three eighths in the surrounding measures. The quarter note pulse in these measures will be approximately 160-168 bpm.
4. When the main 16th note “Rumble Strip” pattern occurs in both movements, bring out the emphasized tenuto markings. In mm. 17-18 the emphasized notes are (in bold):
1e+a 2e+a 3e+a | 1e+a 2e+a 3
5. During the rolled chord section of mm. 49-63, if the player has chosen a medium hard set of mallets, a softer sound can be achieved by lifting the hands/end of the mallet shaft higher to create a steeper angle towards the keyboard. The mallet yarn is less tightly wrapped closer to the tip of the mallet head, which can be used for less attack in softer, legato passages.

Movement II

1. In mm. 47-49, focus your eyes on mallets 2 and 3 within the four-note chords.
2. At m. 66, begin practicing under tempo to avoid flams on the down beat of beats 2, 4, 6, and 8.
3. As Mvt. II is brought up to performance tempo with the written notes, continue to listen for and avoid flams when double stops are played.

Beads of Glass (2004)

Background Information:

This work began as a commission by Leigh Howard Stevens who wanted a piece for solo marimba and percussion quartet. As Stout created the first few ideas, he could not find a suitable way to include the percussion accompaniment and decided to set this music aside. His new ideas for completing the commission became the piece *Route 666*. He later returned to his original themes and developed them into *Beads of Glass*. The piece was dedicated to Stevens since its inception would not have occurred without the commission. Stout describes the piece as “a beautiful tapestry of sound” which allows the player to showcase the beautiful, rich sounds of the middle and lower registers of the 5 octave marimba.

Range: 5 octave marimba

Publisher: KPP (www.mostlymarimba.com).

Mallet Recommendation: 1 2 3 4
 Sft. Md. Sft. Md. Sft. Md. Sft.

Exercises (Grid Notation):

As the exercises progress, some of the sticking patterns will be repetitions of earlier patterns. What is important is the *order* in which the four note groupings are presented to ensure that the player is comfortable playing any combination of stickings at various intervals.


General Warm Up

1. Play the OILR warm up with both hands at an octave. Refer to p. 48 of the introduction if needed. Additionally try this with both hands at a 9th and a 10th. The right hand will encounter a 10th interval in sections such as mm. 36-54.

Mm. 1-6

Play each at Quarter= 150 - 160 and Both Hands: 5th



4.  Also try with Right Hand: Octave

5.  Also try with Right Hand:
6th and Octave

Mm. 23, 36, and 132

6.  Quarter= 150 - 160
Right Hand: Octave
Left Hand: 5th and 6th

Play this with a 10th in the right hand to prepare for mm. 36-54.

Letter C

Play each at Quarter= 140 - 160

Mm. 100-103

7.  Right Hand: Octave
Left Hand: 4th

Mm. 104-107

8.  Right Hand: 5th
Left Hand: 4th

M. 113-123

9.  Right Hand: Octave
Left Hand: 4th

Mm. 125-127

10.  Both Hands: 4th

Musical notation for measures 125-127, showing a sequence of eighth notes in both hands. The right hand starts on a G4 and the left hand starts on a G3. The notation is in 4/4 time and includes repeat signs at the beginning and end.

Mm. 157-160

11.  Quarter= 140 - 155
Right Hand: Octave
Left Hand: 5th

Musical notation for measures 157-160, showing a sequence of eighth notes in both hands. The right hand starts on a G4 and the left hand starts on a G3. The notation is in 6/4 time and includes repeat signs at the beginning and end.

Mm. 161-162

12. 

Musical notation for measures 161-162, showing a sequence of eighth notes in both hands. The right hand starts on a G4 and the left hand starts on a G3. The notation is in 10/4 time and includes repeat signs at the beginning and end.

Quarter= 140 - 155
Right Hand: Octave
Left Hand: 5th

Letter E

13.  Quarter= 140 - 155
Right Hand: Octave
Left Hand: 5th

Musical notation for Letter E, showing a sequence of eighth notes in both hands. The right hand starts on a G4 and the left hand starts on a G3. The notation is in 6/4 time and includes repeat signs at the beginning and end.

Notes/Recommendations:

1. The main theme of this piece has similarities to *Astral Dance* in that it has a singing melody emerging from the texture of a constant flow of notes. Bring out the notes in mallet 4 more than others when playing this theme and the following sections with a similar sound. In moments such as mm. 6 and 36, bring out the higher of the two notes played by mallet 4, usually a minor 3rd above the first note. Particular emphasis should obviously be given to notes with tenuto accent markings as well.
2. This piece presents moments where the hands are several octaves apart such as mm. 40 and 149. Through slow practice, choose which hand to look at during these moments. Return your eyes to the center (between the hands) whenever possible, while minimizing the frequency of the eyes shifting back and forth.
3. When playing measures with a 10th in the right hand, such as mm. 36-54, it will be more comfortable to hold an octave interval and use a small arm shift between the notes. For most of this piece it is best to keep your eyes focused in between the hands on mallets 2 and 3. Since this 10th interval always occurs during a four note sticking pattern of 1234, look for the upper note on mallet 4 as you shift your arm to the right and immediately bring your eyes back to center.
4. Mallet head placement choices must be made to avoid mallet crossing between m. 56 and Letter B. Here are a few suggestions:
 - a. On beat 3 of m. 56, play the Gb with mallet 1 in the center of the bar.
 - b. In m. 57, play the right hand Ab notes on the edges of the bars. Lift your left hand a little higher, increasing the shaft angle to further avoid crossing.
 - c. The same idea used in m. 56 can be used in m. 64, placing mallet 1 in the center of the bar on beats 3 and 5.
5. In the section at Letter C, look for the lowest note played by mallet 1 at the beginning of each phrase that returns to the bottom octave of the marimba. As you strike this note, return your eyes to the right hand and look for the note that will be struck by mallet 4 before returning your eyes to the center.

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