

WPN to the Rescue!

By the World Percussion Network Committee

NO OTHER INSTRUMENTAL FAMILY HAS SUCH DEEP ROOTS, cultural interconnections and endless variety as percussion. As students, hobbyists, teachers and performers, we are constantly faced with questions concerning the percussive arts for which we have no answers. One of the biggest advantages of getting on-line with the Percussive Arts Society's World Percussion Network is the ability to "pick the brains" of hundreds of other percussionists from around the globe. Someone, somewhere is going to know the answers to your questions—and chances are, they are on the WPN!

In this article, we'll follow the quest of four percussionists searching for answers: Sandra Larson needs information concerning a composition book that covers percussion. Marc Zoutendijk is trying to find information on composer Johanna M. Beyer. Russ Girsberger needs to know about an instrument called a "Frico Whistle." And Marc Crompton wants more information about boo-bams.

So, off we go on our adventure. Note that all of these questions were posted on public forums for all WPN users to see. Notice, too, that all questions were answered in a matter of days (and in some cases, hours).

Date: Thursday, October 27, 1994 5:27am /Hello
From: Sandra Larson Msg#: 3712
To: ** ALL **
Re: Composition book?(2 replies)

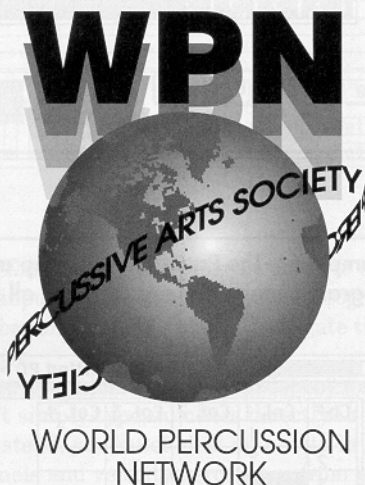
I am looking for a composition book (or anything else) that discusses percussion. Specifically, something that includes compositional techniques, notation practices, timbre possibilities, etc... This is for a friend of mine that is a composition major. I had some basic ideas, but there has to be better things.

Thanks,
Sandra

Date: Friday, October 28, 1994 7:15pm /Hello
From: Neil Grover Msg#: 3732
To: SANDRA LARSON
Re: Composition book?
(Reply to #3712)

Try "Contemporary Percussion" by Reginald Brindle Smith. It is a great reference source for composers.

Neil Grover



Date: Sunday, October 30, 1994 12:50pm /Hello
From: Russ Girsberger Msg#: 3752
To: SANDRA LARSON
Re: Composition book?
(Reply to #3712)

Sandra,
Neil is absolutely correct. The Brindle is the most comprehensive source for description, characteristics and notation of percussion instruments, from snare drum to bull roarers. The notation examples may be the most important part of the book, since we all know what it's like to have to decipher an unusual notation system before we begin each new piece.

The Brindle has also been reprinted and should still be available to purchase.

Brindle, Reginald Smith. "Contemporary Percussion." (London: New York: Oxford University Press, c1991) xii, 212 p. ISBN 0-19-816247-2 (pbk.) LCCN 90-19694 \$34.95

For something a little more traditional in its approach to notation and orchestration, you might recommend:

Reed, H. Owen & Joel T. Leach. "Scoring for Percussion."

(Melville, NY: Belwin-Mills Publishing Corp, c1969, revised edition 1978) ix, 150 p. (pbk) \$7.50 [or so]

A book with pictures and dictionary descriptions of the instruments might also be helpful to a composer, and certainly to a conductor. These both have good photos and ranges of standard instruments (although not everyone will have access to the variety of instruments which Emil Richards owns):

Peinkofer, Karl & Fritz Tannigel. "Handbook of Percussion Instruments." (Mainz, Germany: B. Schott & Sons, c1969. Sole Selling Agent: European American Music) 257 p. LCCN 76-000330 [English translation of "Handbuch des Schlagzeugs"]

Richards, Emil. "Emil Richards' 'World of Percussion': A Catalog of 300 Standard, Ethnic, and Special Musical Instruments and Effects." (Sherman Oaks, CA: Gwyn Publishing Co., c1972. Selling Agent: Warner Bros. Publications) 94 p.

All of these books should still be available for purchase. Lone Star Percussion (214-340-0835) has the Reed & Leach and the Peinkofer & Tannigel. The Drum Specialist (708-724-3937) has access to an enormous amount of literature, especially European materials. You may also try Drums Unlimited (301-654-2719).

Date: Sunday, September 18, 1994 8:33pm /Ensemble

From: Marc Zoutendijk Msg#: 3032

To: ** ALL **

Re: Johanna M. Beyer(3 replies)

Larry Dean Vanlandingham wrote a dissertation in 1971 with the title: THE PERCUSSION ENSEMBLE 1930-1945. In this dissertation Larry mentions one Johanna M. Beyer who wrote a number of percussion compositions (back in the thirties!). The information that Larry used came from the Edwin A. Fleisher Music Collection in the Free Library of Philadelphia. Is there anyone out there who knows more of this Ms. Beyer?

Anyone who ever heard her music?

Anyone who ever played her music?

Has her music ever been published, and if so, by whom?

Is her music (printed or in copied form) available now?

Any other information about her is welcome.

Marc Zoutendijk, Royal Conservatory of Music,
The Hague, The Netherlands

Date: Monday, September 19, 1994 6:02am /Ensemble

From: K. Allen Brown Msg#: 3049

To: MARC ZOUTENDIJK

Re: Johanna M. Beyer

(Reply to #3032)

Contact Tom Siwe at the University of Illinois/Champaign, Urbana, Illinois. He is the supreme expert on early percussion ensembles and knows a lot about the Beyer pieces. You can actually rent the music to these pieces from the Fleisher Library, and Tom will be able to help you contact them.

His address:

Thomas Siwe

Percussion Dept., School of Music

University of Illinois, Urbana, Illinois

61801 USA

I would be interested in hearing how you make out. You can also e-mail me at the University of Pacific at the following address:

ABrown2@vms1.cc.uop.edu

Good luck, Allen

Date: Sunday, October 2, 1994 1:09pm /Ensemble
From: Russ Girsberger
To: MARC ZOUTENDIJK
Re: Johanna M. Beyer (1 reply)
(Reply to #3032)

Marc,

There is some basic information about Johanna M. Beyer in two standard reference books used here in the U.S.

"Baker's Biographical Dictionary of Music" by Nicolas Slonimsky (8th edition) has: Beyer, Johanna Magdalena, German-American composer and musicologist; b. Leipzig, July 11, 1888; d. N.Y., Jan. 9, 1944.

She studied piano and music theory in Germany. In 1924 she went to America and studied at the David Mannes School in N.Y.; received a teacher's certificate in 1928.

She also took private lessons with Dane Rudhyar, Ruth Crawford, Charles Seeger, and Henry Cowell. She wrote music and several plays for various projects in N.Y. During Cowell's term in San Quentin prison (1937-41), Beyer acted as his secretary and took care of his scores. Her own composition style is dissonant counterpoint. She composed much chamber music; among her most interesting works are 4 string quartets (1934, 1936, 1938, 1943), "Cyrnab" for Chamber Orch. (1937), "Reverence" for Wind Ensemble (1938), and "Music of the Spheres" for 3 Electrical Instruments of Strings (1938; from the unfinished opera "Status Quo").

The "International Encyclopedia of Women Composers" by Aaron I. Cohen (2nd edition, 1987) has:

Beyer, Johanna Magdalena. German-American secretary and composer. b. Leipzig, 1888; d. New York, 1944. She went to the United States after the turn of the century and took up composition studies under the experimentalist Henry Cowell. She lived for the most part in Lower Manhattan and became secretary and assistant to her teacher during the late 1930s. Her compositions number over 50 and are housed in the library of the American Music Centre in New York.

The list of works includes:

5 pieces for orchestra in addition to "Other orchestral pieces using special sound effects such as lion's roar, metal bowls, Chinese blocks, thunder sheet and rice bowls."

20 pieces of chamber music

4 pieces of vocal music, including

"Three Songs for Soprano, Percussion and Piano" (1933) to texts by Carl Sandburg

1 opera

1 piece of electronic music (a recording of this piece is cited in the discography)

and 6 pieces for percussion: "March" for 30

percussion (1939) "Percussion Suite in 3 Movements" (for triangle, woodblock, tam tam, snare drum, kettle drums, & gongs) "IV for Percussion" (1935) in the New Music Orchestra Series C 1936 "Percussion, Op. 14" (1939) "Three Movements" (1939) "Waltz" (1939)
There are also biographical references to six other books.
The Edwin A. Fleisher Collection of Orchestral Music in the Free Library of Philadelphia: A Cumulative Catalog, 1929-1977 (published in Boston, MA by G. K. Hall & Co.) lists 12 pieces by Beyer, including:
"IV" for nine percussion players (instruments not specified), score 4 pages, composed 1935
"March for 30 Percussion Instruments," manuscript score, 4 pages, composed 1939, duration 4'30"
"Percussion, Op. 14" for 6 players, manuscript score, 3 pages, composed 1939, duration 4'
"Percussion Suite in 3 Movements" for 5 players, manuscript score, 17 pages, composed 1933
"Three Movements for Percussion" (number of players not specified), manuscript score, 4 pages, composed 1939
"Waltz for Percussion" (number of players not specified), manuscript score, 4 pages, composed 1939 as well as 6 works for orchestra which include percussion or timpani in their instrumentation.

Music in the Fleisher Collection may be lent to performing organizations or educational institutions and may be contacted by writing:
The Edwin A. Fleisher Music Collection
The Free Library of Philadelphia
Logan Square
Philadelphia, PA 19103 USA
You can contact the American Music Center about Beyer's manuscripts by writing:
American Music Center
30 West 26th Street
New York, NY 10010
I hope this helps in your search. Let us know what you find!

Russ

Date: Sunday, October 2, 1994 8:58pm /Ensemble
From: Marc Zoutendijk
To: RUSS GIRSBERGER
Re: Johanna M. Beyer
(Reply to #3294)

Hello Russ,

Thank you for your information. This is surely of some help. Some of Beyer's music has already showed up here in my country, but there seems to be a lot more. I'm teaching at the royal conservatory in The Hague, The Netherlands, and

preparing a program with unknown percussion music.
I'll let you know how things are going.

Marc.

Date: Sunday, August 28, 1994 7:59pm /Hello
From: Russ Girsberger Msg#: 2457
To: ** ALL **
Re: Fricos, anyone? (2 replies)

Once again we turn to the collective wisdom of
the World Percussion Network...

What is a "Frico Whistle"?

I found it on a piece of music: "Fate" (It Was
Fate When I First Met You) by Byron Gay,
arranged as a foxtrot song for band by George J.
Trinkaas, published by Carl Fischer, ca. 1923.
The music calls for "Frico Whistle or Bells ad
lib" and it plays a melody line in the refrain.

Clearly, it is a melodic instrument, but what
kind of sound should it be? Does this sound
like a vaudeville trap instrument? I have
checked several sources (Blades, Peinkofer,
Peters, Brindle, Adato, Richards, Jakob, &
Holland) with no luck.

Any suggestions?

Thanks for the advice.

Russ

Date: Monday, August 29, 1994 3:03am /Hello
From: Norm Weinberg Msg#: 2460
To: RUSS GIRSBERGER
Re: Fricos, anyone? (2 replies)
(Reply to #2457)

My only guess - the result of the only whistle
that I know of that is capable of playing a
melodic passage - SLIDE Whistle. The other
possibility - of course - is the ever popular NOSE
FLUTE. Perhaps a popular manufacturer during the
20s was called FRICO.

Just a guess. Let me know the CORRECT answer.

Norm

Date: Monday, August 29, 1994 5:24am /Hello
From: Rebecca Ifland Msg#: 2467
To: NORM WEINBERG
Re: Fricos, anyone?
(Reply to #2460)

Norm,
Another whistle which is melodic is the Penny
Whistle. Perhaps Frico produced these?

Just a thought.

Rebecca

Date: Sunday, September 11, 1994 2:26pm /Hello
From: Russ Girsberger Msg#: 2827
To: RUSS GIRSBERGER
Re: Fricos, anyone?
(Reply to #2457)

OK, for those of you who just couldn't sleep
until they knew the mystery of the "Frisco
whistle." here's the scoop from Jim Strain at
the University of Kansas:

A "Frisco Whistle" is the same thing as a
"Song Whistle" -or- what we now call a
"Slide Whistle". It was popular in the
twenties and thirties. I am sure it is
mentioned in passing in the Leedy Topics,
but I didn't take the time to find the
reference. I knew it would be included in
at least one of the catalogs of "Traps"
that I have...and in the "Progressive Mus.
Inst. Co." catalog of 1931, it is listed as
the "Frisco Song Whistle"....so, I guess
they used to play *real* melodies on the
thing!! There is a very clear picture of
the instrument, and it is just like the
present day, brass w/chrome plating slide
whistle. I do know there was a fairly well-
known vaudeville drummer named Frisco, who
might have performed or recorded on the
instrument, giving it the name. (This is
NOT the xylophonist Lou Chiha Friscoe.)

There is a picture and description of "The
Frisco Song Whistle" on page 43 of "History
of the Ludwig Drum Company" by Paul William
Schmidt (Fullerton, CA: Centerstream,
1991).

Thanks to everyone who contributed.
Another percussive mystery solved by the
WPN.

Date: Wednesday, November 9, 1994 2:05pm /General
From: Marc D Crompton Msg#: 3971
To: ** ALL **
Re: Boo-Bams (2 replies)

Can anyone help me? I've been given what
I've been told is a copy of the original
percussion parts to "The Cantina Band" from
"Star Wars". The conductor of a semi-
professional wind ensemble that I play in
wishes to replicate the percussion parts as
closely as possible to the original. The
part calls for Boo-Bams. Does anyone know
what these instruments are? I know that
they are pitched, but that is all I know.
HELP!

Cheers,
Marc

Date: Thursday, November 10, 1994 10:17pm /General
From: Evelyn Glennie Msg#: 3994
To: MARC D CROMPTON
Re: Boo-Bams (2 replies)
(Reply to #3971)

Hi Marc,
A concerto was written for Evelyn a few years ago called "Figure in a Landscape" by Dominic Muldowney. The piece has a large setup of both tuned and untuned percussion and a set of Boo-Bams was specified. The Boo-Bams that Evelyn used were a set of 8 pieces of plastic tubing about 4-5" diameter and of slightly varying lengths (1-2 feet). The tubes were then mounted on a steel frame at an angle. Each tube had a single plastic head that was quite thin and tight. The varying lengths of the tubes gave each one a variation in pitch. The sound produced being mainly attack with very little resonance.

I think I remember Evelyn saying that Boo-Bams originate from Latin America. If this is so then I should imagine that their design and construction varies greatly.

Greg

Date: Friday, November 11, 1994 2:58pm /General
From: Marc Zoutendijk Msg#: 4033
To: MARC D CROMPTON
Re: Boo-Bams (1 reply)
(Reply to #3971)

Hi other Marc,
This is not really true. The instrument originated in the USA and was made from pieces of BAMBOO (hence the name!) cut to different lengths and covered with one calfskin head at one of the open ends. The first sets consisted of 3 drums. Later they were commercially made in much larger (and tuned) sets of about 2 octaves. At least TAMA made a set for use with the drumset.

Hans Werner Henze is one of the composers who wrote for the BooBams in his piece "El Cimarron" (1970).

Bye,
Marc Zoutendijk

Date: Friday, November 11, 1994 3:19pm /General
From: Marc D Crompton Msg#: 4036
To: EVELYN GLENNIE
Re: Boo-Bams
(Reply to #3994, Reply to #3971)

Thanks Greg,
There is a drum manufacturer in Vancouver (Ayotte Custom Drums) who used to make what

they called Boo-Bams. I wasn't sure if this was something that they had invented or if it was modeled after something else. The construction sounds the same. Thanks for your help!

Cheers,
Marc

Date: Friday, November 11, 1994 3:25pm /General
From: Marc D Crompton Msg#: 4037
To: MARC ZOUTENDIJK
Re: Boo-Bams
(Reply to #4033, Reply to #3971)

Marc,
Thanks for the info on the Boo-Bams. I should be able to approximate the sound now. (If not find Boo-Bams!)
BTW, It's great to find another Marc. There aren't too many of us where I live that spell it with a "C". The "C" stands for class you know!

Cheers,
Marc

Date: Sunday, November 13, 1994 1:41am /General
From: Evelyn Glennie Msg#: 4049
To: MARC ZOUTENDIJK
Re: Boo-Bams (1 reply)
(Reply to #4035)

Hi Marc,
Regarding the Boo-Bams, the information I gave was only what I had picked up. Evelyn was away at the time in the north of England giving a few concerts so I took the liberty of replying without consulting Evelyn. If the Boo-Bams were originally made from bamboo with a calf skin head wouldn't this qualify as quite a variation from the plastic versions?

Regards,
Greg

PN