

Reviews and Quotations

Constellations I (Solo für Marimbaphon)

"It's the best piece I have ever come across that explores sound effects on the marimba in a really musical way. It is the essence of the piece rather than an 'addition'. Maximilian is absolutely superb and the video work is really well done."

–Dame Evelyn Glennie, Soloist

Review (Percussive Notes, February 2022):

This unaccompanied four-mallet marimba solo also employs the marimba frame as part of its sound and timbral resource. This solo is quite avant-garde in its presentation, and a set of detailed performance notes provides a good interpretive outline of this 12-section structure.

Additionally, there is a "no-clef" staff for the special sound effects of the marimba frame. (This reviewer recalls an era in the 1980s when such percussionists as Michael Udow utilized a specially equipped, or modified, vibraphone known as a timbrack to achieve similar contrasting timbres.) Marimbists will need to acquaint themselves with special notations of striking everything from the resonators to the marimba frame in order to render a smooth, satisfying performance. Structurally, the piece moves from a pointillistic (or sparse) effect to a very demanding arpeggiated effect about two-thirds through the composition, ending with sparse sounds, similar to the opening section.

Receiving 2nd prize in the 2021 Stellar Composer Competition, this solo would be appropriate for a graduate-level solo recital.

–Jim Lambert, Adjunct Professor at Cameron University

Fast Radio Bursts (Solo für kleine Trommel und Tape)

Review (Percussive Notes, June 2024):

The title of "Fast Radio Bursts - A Polyru-dimetric Etude" references an astrophysics concept referring to a strong, sudden burst of electromagnetic radiation. This is reflected in the music through the playback's spacious timbres and the fast, technical, quasi-improvisatory snare drum part. Lasting just over four minutes, the piece travels through nine brief sections identified by varying polyrhythmic material, beating implements, and musical styles.

The rhythmic material makes up a bulk of the work's difficulty, with constant changes in meter and "tuplets," all lining up with the backing track. Additional challenge lies in the notation: There are myriad beating implements, sounds, and techniques required of the performer, and thus the sheet music utilizes many different noteheads and directional notation symbols. The part is completely idiomatic, flows well, and feels good to play, but it will take the performer some time to become comfortable with the notation and various implement techniques.

Overall, "Fast Radio Bursts" is an exciting and unique new work for snare drum, further expanding the ever-growing repertoire for percussion and electronics. Maximilian Schwarz achieves a nice variety of sounds and styles on a single snare drum, creating a work as challenging as it is fun to play.

–Dr. Marco Schirripa, Assistant Professor of Percussion at Central Michigan University

Echoes A 〈Memories of Agboglobloshie〉 (Solo für Multi-Percussion)

Review (Percussive Notes, February 2025):

"Echoes A" is a thought-provoking and wonderfully complex work for solo multi-percussion. The composer states that this piece is meant to call attention to the "illegal export of waste to poorer countries" with some specific areas that have been affected. The composer masterfully represents these areas while creating various textures and melodic ideas throughout the work. Each section feels like a different place with its own character and purpose. Listening only to the audio, it's difficult to believe that all of this can be achieved through one player.

While the setup diagram included with the sheet music looks a bit large and the instrument list looks a bit long, the setup ends up being sleek, fascinating, and surprisingly compact. The composer lists many common instrument substitutions for some of the rarer instruments, but I think something would get lost in translation. The textures presented throughout the work with the suggested instruments are extremely interesting and successful partially due to the smartly chosen instruments. Even the notation has obviously benefited from a great deal of thought and consideration to make the complex rhythms and melodies as easy to read as possible.

As for the performance aspect, this work is certainly not an easy one. Of course, there are many classic aspects for this work: fast, note-heavy passages, mixed meters, wood versus metal, etc. One of the more challenging aspects is when the performer, although standing, must play a pedal with each foot while playing melodic rhythms with multiple implements in the hands. Even if you do not plan to perform this piece, check out the video of the composer performing this piece online; it is very professional and well done.

The composer's performance looks almost effortless, but if you've ventured into the multi-percussion life before, you'll know that's not the case. If you're up to the challenge, this work would be an absolute highlight on any recital or program.

—Dr. Ben Cantrell, Assistant Professor of Percussion at Morehead State University

Emergence (ZYKLUS) Single

Review (Expansión Radial, April 2025):

Maximilian Wolfgang Schwarz delivers an immersive sound experience with his new single Emergence, part of his EP Zyklus. The multi-instrumentalist and composer fuses electronic elements with a cinematic vision, achieving a sound that transports the listener to full and vibrant soundscapes.

From the first seconds, Emergence immerses us in a hypnotic atmosphere with pulsating electronic textures. Its cinematographic essence is evident, evoking images of a primordial world in full transformation. The production is impeccable, with sound layers that expand and contract, generating a sensation of total immersion. At certain moments, the track gains momentum with techno influences, adding dynamism and an enveloping rhythm. Experimentation is key to the structure of the piece, playing with polyrhythms and constantly evolving sounds. This bold and well-executed approach demonstrates schwarz's mastery of production and composition.

For an unconventional listening experience, Emergence is a must-listen. Maximilian Wolfgang Schwarz continues to push the boundaries of music with his innovative style. Don't forget to follow him on his social networks and stay tuned for my next recommendations.

—Oliver Zurita, Editor in Chief (Expansión Radial)