

Marimba Around the World Notes (6 Sept, 2020)

Recorded near Ardrossan in the cabin-home of the parents of our drummer, Dale Osbaldeston.
Core instruments in (most) tracks: Marimba, drumset, vibraphone

Musicians

Jayden Beaudoin: marimba, vibraphone, percussion
Dale Osbaldeston: drumset, marimba
Stephen Stone: marimba, percussion, all arrangements

Recording engineer: Jeremy Maitland, Pika Audio
Mixing: Jeremy Maitland
Mastering: Spencer Cheyne
Digital Paintings: Marek Tamowicz (Poland), Abhay Pratap Singh (India)
Cover Photo: Jen Rush, JRush Photography
Layout Design: Daniela Camacho (Venezuela)

Chronicling of this creation can be found on our crowdfunding updates:

<https://www.indiegogo.com/projects/marimba-around-the-world-sticks-and-stone-album#/updates/all>

1. Cacharpaya

A traditional Andean panpipe tune, *Cacharpaya* has seen many popular covers, most notably in the 1980's by the band called Incantation. In our adaptation, we have added a cannon intro which is revisited as a harmonized unison outro, while the original melody is contained only in the A section. The B section is also newly-composed, with original harmonic material and a funky bass line. As has become the Sticks and Stone standard to any style of music, we also incorporate elements of jazz and improvise over the harmonic material. Supporting percussion includes djembe, cowbell, shaker and claves.

2. Tsumaile

The exact origins of *Tsumaile*, a traditional Romani love song, are unknown. Our version, however, is not so different from many covers that exist, except that it is performed with our unique instruments. Soloistic flair and perhaps one of the most upbeat "train grooves" in the world from Dale on drumset will make you want to clap along.

3. Ciucciu bellu

This is a traditional song from southern Italy, telling the tale of the death of a farmer's donkey, and in a agrarian society, when one's donkey dies, it's quite significant. To illustrate just how important this is and how much this will impact the farmer, he reveals, in a later verse, that he is less bothered by the death of his own wife than the death of his donkey. We chose to take this music and play it in a bit more of a rock style. At the same time, in tribute to Italian style, we include tambourine in the instrumentation.

4. Tipe Tizwe

From Zimbabwe, *Tipe Tizwe*, is a folk song traditionally played on m'bira, the African thumb piano. It is also frequently performed by Zimbabwean style marimba-bands. We have adapted it significantly with modernist-classical experimental ideas. In this take, we crush the melody from its original 12/8 meter into 4/4 time and then continuously shift the melody rhythmically using a concept known as “phasing”. Then, as the lead marimba player solos, the drums play in 3/4 time, grinding against the marimba in 4/4, all in a shuffle groove.

5. Nereidas, by Amador Perez Torres

Danzon *Nereidas*, written in 1932, is perhaps the best-known piece of music from the dance style “Danzon” in Mexico. Danzon is both a popular social and competition dance, with Danzon *Nereidas* used frequent at the end the night for many events as a last-call song. Our marimba rendition here is supported with castanets, maracas, and bongos, as well as some powerful drumming in the later fast section.

See our self-made music video and interview with local Edmonton-based Mexican dancer Alicia Ortega for more information: <https://youtu.be/Kt-QtypeG68>

6. Mi Lupita, by Mario Tactic

Mi Lupita is a well-known tune from Guatemala (where the marimba is the national instrument!), composed for marimba-band by Mario Tactic in 1957. We have modified this light, upbeat song slightly, writing some additional melodies around the original tune. In this rendition, Jayden, Dale and Stephen are on the same marimba, while Dale also accompanies them with light brushwork on drum set.

7. Ritual, by Dario Ulloa

This is our take on *Ritual*, a very old and well-known love song from Honduras, one of many Latin-American countries where the marimba is popular. Beyond the marimba, we add bongos, guiro, and cabasa as supporting percussion. Most unique in this interpretation is the deliberate slow drawl of the song as well as the spacing and emptiness at the end of phrases.

8. Tabuh Telu

Tabuh Telu is based on a Balinese form of folk music known as rindik, which involves two percussionists playing bamboo xylophone-like instruments, also called rindik, as well as one musician playing a bamboo flute. Rindik music is performed solely for entertainment purposes, whether to pass time or perhaps more significantly for performance in touristy locations. It is a folk music, sometimes viewed in lesser light than more 'serious' gamelan music, and the regions and composers of melodies are generally not remembered. In our adaptation, we have translated the rindik instrument parts to the marimba and the bamboo flute part to the vibraphone. Additionally, we added some tuned gongs, and

while they are more likely to resemble the sound of gamelan music, we felt that it helped to create a uniquely ethereal atmosphere.

9. Ey Yare Jani

Performed by countless musicians, *Ey Yare Jani* ('My Sweet Beloved') is a very old and well-known Persian love song. The feel of the music comes from a musical mode known as 'Hijaz Maqam', which is simply but imperfectly translated to western music theory as 'Phrygian Dominant' (C Db E F G Ab Bb). This version is a very modern interpretation with many additions. It starts by adding new chordal accompaniment to the original melody before breaking into jazzy soloing. Then, we move into new material within the mode, going on a journey which is continuously filled with mixed meter. The new material sees an escapade in 7/8 by Jayden and Stephen on marimba while Dale continues to hold a strong 4 feel that crosses barlines before it rallies in a powerful 9/8 finale which returns to the original melody of the song. In the album recording, multiple marimbas are looped over the solo, and percussion support is provided by dumbek and triangle. One Arabic music expert we consulted with describes this arrangement as a "a beautiful marriage of Jazz and Hijaz".

Here is music-video performance made in times of isolation along with Ziya Tabassian, a Montreal-based Iranian percussionist, who joins us by cell-phone from Thailand:

<https://youtu.be/M4ZcNugnCsY>

10. Snake Charmer

The melodic fragment which derives this work comes from a demonstration of the Punghi wind instrument from Rajasthan, India, and was literally used for snake charming. The drone of the instrument in 5ths is played on the bass portion of the marimba while the melody is played in the treble. The original material that inspired this derivation does not have meter, but this arrangement sees subtle meter change between 4/4, two versions of 7/8, and 3/4. The melody is deliberately displaced to align in non-intuitive locations to break the standard western connection to meter. The style of drumming takes inspiration from modern iterations of Paul Simon's pop-folk music, specifically with ideas from the album 'Surprise'. While world music often does not have harmony or harmonic direction in the same way we do in the West, Stephen had an idea to keep the initial drone going as long as possible before having moving harmony at the end. After that exploration of displaced melody over changing meter for a significant amount of time, the introduction of harmony over a soaring newly-composed melody feels like a release. The marimba and drumset of this piece are supported by dumbek and triangle.

11. A Place Like This

A Place Like This was Co-composed by Elk Island Public School Teachers and Wilson Bearhead who is Nakota of Wabamun Lake First Nation. On Tuesday, Jan 29, 2019, as Stephen was finishing his after-degree in education, he found himself in a room of music educators with Elder Bearhead discussing how to include more indigenous content in music classrooms. In particular, this song received notable focus as it was written for children's choirs as well as adapted for wind band. Stephen asked permission for its use for the "Marimba Around the World" album he would be creating. Supporting the marimba, vibraphone and drumset is a small amount of triangle, for our rock-lullaby take on this song.

Performance of this song can be found online, as well as Stephen's interview of Wilson Bearhead here on YouTube: <https://youtu.be/3GTjPvHvLCo>

12. Amigo, by Roberto Carlos

This is the one song on the album that is originally a pop-song, and was written in 1977 by Roberto Carlos of Brazil. It was originally discovered by Stephen via a cell-phone video of a tourist from Nicaragua, where a haunting version was performed by a large traditional marimba-band, and it took Stephen a while to trace its source! This is the Sticks and Stone arrangement, changed for their 3-person group. Like *Mi Lupita* and *Ritual*, this sees all three musicians on the same marimba. Bongos are also used in accompaniment.

13. Oseh Shalom, by Nurit Hirsh

Many people consider this to be one of the best known Jewish songs of all-time. *Oseh Shalom* is a 'Prayer of Peace', and for many, is a song of the Sabbath. It was suggested as a song from Jewish friends and its singing is so widespread that many mistake it for an ancient folk-song. It was originally written in 1969, however, by Nurit Hirsh, with her music set to the 13th century Kaddish Prayer. This album version has slight melodic changes. The middle section is taken at a faster speed for improvisation before a return to a slow version of the melody in the end. In addition to marimba and vibraphone, we can also hear glockenspiel, bass drum, finger cymbals, and wind chimes in this creative interpretation.

14. Hina Na Ho, by Johnny Landry

Hina Na Ho, written by Johnny Landry, is perhaps one of the best-known songs of the Northwest Territories. It is the first known western-style folk song to be written in the Dene language of South Slavey, and this song is frequently played at the end of the night in bars across the Northwest Territories. Stephen first heard the song performed by a Dene singer with a frame drum at the Heritage Festival in Edmonton, but despite asking permission and searching out contact information, it took a very long time to discover the origins of this song. Unfortunately, due to COVID and mandatory isolation policies, Johnny Landry was unable to join us for our album release on 12 September, 2020. Beyond marimba, drumset, and vibraphone, this recording includes a frame drum, rainstick, windchimes and llama claws.

More on the process with this song: <https://www.facebook.com/notes/stephen-stone/appropriate-sharing-vs-appropriation-in-art-my-upcoming-album/10156712261511496>

15. Boat Song

This traditional song comes from South Korea and tells a story of travelling the ocean. It is thought to have come from the traditional Gyeongsang province, but now is more associated with the Gyeonggi province. We divide this song into both a slow and fast section. The slow section is restful, with tuned gongs helping to calm the water while the marimba, vibraphone, and glockenspiel take us on our

journey. The fast section trades the glockenspiel for the drumset and the tuned gongs for all the Korean Samulnori percussion instruments.

The Samulnori percussion instruments were played by Stephen, who had lived in South Korea for a year and a half where he both taught English and learned Korean traditional drum and dance. Being Stephen's most personal experience of another culture outside of Canada, it feels fitting to end the album on a powerful note with Korean percussion.

More about the Boat Song can be seen on this video: <https://youtu.be/O8Q1eLrYLso>

Note from Stephen:

For the physical album, I hired two digital painters for the artwork. Marek Tamowicz from Poland, and Abhay Pratap Singh from India. There was considerable dialogue between us for the creation of the images, which all have messages and metaphors buried in them.

Rather than try to tell the best traditional stories of all of this music and their origins, I felt that this music needed to be a new telling - a new story. The music borrows from and pays homage to beauty from cultures around the world, but it would have never been possible to be entirely authentic in the truest sense. In the words of a friend, "Culture does not exist in a vacuum", and it is influenced by many things. This album had to be something new. I hope that in hearing the music and seeing these digital paintings, the listener, the viewer can feel their own stories in the experience.





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