

Diritti: No Limit

Luigi Morleo

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Morleo Editore

Intrumentation (5 players): solo vibraphone and string quartet

Web: [link to video recording](#)

Clocking in at over a half hour in length, this concerto for solo vibraphone with string quartet accompaniment is a major workout for both the soloist and ensemble. Alternating between rhythmic grooves, dense polyrhythms, and moments of free improvisation, this work will challenge even the most seasoned chamber musicians.

The first movement begins with unison ostinato patterns in the strings, complemented by counterpoint in the vibraphone. The middle section of the movement consists of overlapping septuple, quintuple, triple, and duple rhythms in the strings, over which the vibraphone is instructed to improvise freely. A recording of the piece shows the soloist adhering to a specific melodic/harmonic vocabulary, although no chord changes are indicated in the part. The movement ends with a return to the more groove-oriented material featured in the beginning.

The second movement features a variety of sounds from the soloist, who must manipulate a bow, wooden stick, and two vibraphone mallets simultaneously. While this might appear daunting, the writing is idiomatic and falls into repetitive patterns.

The third movement features another passage for free improvisation for the performer, ending with dense rhythmic overlapping of quintuple rhythms and quarter-note triplets between all of the players. I was extremely impressed watching a live performance video of this section, as the ensemble coordination was outstanding. The only detraction was the interference of the violin parts into the range of the vibraphone in this passage, creating an extremely heavy texture that somewhat voided the soloistic nature of the vibraphone part.

The fourth movement is the most conservative sounding and would probably serve best as a stand alone work. Characterized by a recurring sixteenth-note melody and rhythmic drive in the strings, the piece comes to an energetic finish that is sure to bring audiences to their feet. This work would be of interest to a professional chamber group looking to showcase a wide variety of advanced ensemble skills and sounds.

—*Jason Baker*