

Summary

“The influence of culture, tradition and arts of Japan on contemporary marimba literature by Japanese composers:

Keiko Abe, Minoru Miki and Akira Miyoshi”.

Key words: Japan, music, marimba, tradition, contemporary, aesthetics.

The main goal of this PhD dissertation is to present the influence of Japanese culture, tradition, and arts on the contemporary marimba music by Japanese composers. In that case my research focus is directed onto the presence of the Japanese aesthetics and artistic characteristics in the compositions included in the CD.

In Chapter One I present the correlations between nature and people of Japan paying a lot of attention to the historical and geographical background. To the European societies Japanese Islands have always been assigned to the ritualization of everyday life, ethical codes and the aura of mystical peace and acceptance of fate. In this philosophical layer there is one and most important feature - religion, and so I refer to Zen Buddhism and Shintō. Both of them have generated their own ceremonies and rituals, which also have had an impact on music by shaping traditional musical forms. Another issue included in this chapter, which is crucial in understanding this distant culture, is the glossary of Japanese aesthetics and its origins. Music is an organic element of Japanese culture, tradition and arts and that is why I feel an urge to explain their presence in the marimba pieces presented in this paper. Japan is also a country of great technological and cultural potential which have been evolving since the beginning of the twentieth century. Main cultural and political influences came from the United States and Europe. *Westernization* is an official term which refers to this issue and is mentioned in my research. Western influence has also had a great impact on the evolution of marimba as a solo instrument in Japan, and at the same time was the trigger point for the popularization the instrument worldwide.

The Second Chapter deals with the contemporary music tendencies present in marimba literature. I focus on the classification of the composing styles of the Japanese composers writing for marimba, inspired by the cultures of the East and the West.

In this chapter I also introduce the most important composers responsible for the breakthrough in the marimba music evolution: Keiko Abe, Minoru Miki,

and Akira Miyoshi.

Main goal of the Third Chapter is based on presenting the compositions recorded on the CD, and pointing out the traditional inspirations of the composers deriving from Japanese culture, tradition and arts. In this paper and on my CD I included the following pieces: Keiko Abe “Reflections on Japanese Children's Songs III” for a marimba duo and two percussionists, Keiko Abe “Voice of Matsuri Drums” for marimba solo, Minoru Miki “Sohmon III” for soprano, marimba, and piano, „Marimba Spiritual” for marimba and three percussionists, and Akira Miyoshi “Ripple” for marimba solo.

While choosing the repertoire I wanted to refer to various aesthetics aspects of Japanese culture. In “Sohmon III” one can find traditional Japanese literature, in the pieces by Keiko Abe and Minoru Miki – cultural and religious influences. “Ripple” brings new ideas of contemporary and ancient Japanese philosophy. Further analysis of these pieces is crucial due to the fact that they have become the core of the contemporary marimba literature.