

THE TRAVELING CARNIVAL

CONCERTO FOR VIBRAPHONE

BY  
JOE PORTER

VERSION FOR PERCUSSION ENSEMBLE



**P**ORTER  
PUBLICATIONS

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#### Program Notes

Growing up, a traveling carnival would annually come to my home town. I found it fascinating with all of the rides, games and tricks. For some, the event is full of thrills and smiles, and for others it is scary and disappointing. I was also intrigued by the Carnies, I wondered if the life of the Carnie was happy, sad or dark. In this Concerto, I try to capture some of the main elements of the Traveling Carnival.

The vibraphone is a perfect instrument for capturing these elements. The piece begins with the soloist bowing the vibraphone, imitating the mystique of the Carnival. In the second movement, *The Sad Clown*, the vibraphonist has an expressive part, trying to capture the emotions of the poor Clown. In Movements I and III, *Opening Night*, and *Rides, Games and Trickery*, the vibraphonist has virtuosic parts, dazzling the audience and capturing some of the thrills of the rides and tricks of the Carnival.

In writing a concerto for vibraphone, I wanted to utilize some of the musical language of the roots of the vibraphone, in Jazz and later in Latin-Jazz. The Drumset is added to capture the feel of jazz music and to add an exciting layer to the composition. *The Traveling Carnival* combines elements of Jazz, Latin, Rock and Classical music.

The piece is mainly through-composed with the exception of a solo vamp in Mvt I, where the vibraphonist freely improvises, much like how a jazz combo solos over the head of a tune. The drumset part is also played freely, just like a jazz drummer.

*Opening Night* pays tribute to one of the most common forms used in jazz, the 12-bar blues, but in the minor mode. The movement has many twists and turns, switching gears from Swing to Samba and mixed metre to Afro-Cuban 12/8, all imitating the variety and excitement of the Opening Night at the Carnival. The vibraphonist starts and ends the piece in the dark key of F minor, imitating the behind scenes of the Carnival, and anticipating the next movement, *The Sad Clown*.

In the second movement, I felt it necessary to quote the famous Clown Song, "Entrée Des Gladiateurs" by Ernest Wilhelm Julius Fucík. The piece wasn't originally composed for Carnivals or Circuses, but later it became famous as it was played for the entrance of the clowns. I use it in the *The Sad Clown*, to help imitate the clown going crazy, hearing the song in his head. Meanwhile, the drumset player resembles the contemplative thoughts of the clown, playing a funeral march-like snare drum part. The Bass Marimbas have a corky bass line part, resembling the outside acting face of the clown, and the Vibraphone and upper Marimbas portray the Clowns emotions.

The third movement begins with the vibraphonist imitating kids running around playfully. As their adventure unfolds, the piece develops with the rides and games they try. The kids are interrupted when they see the circus part of the show. The vibraphonist cadenza resembles a flashy circus act, ending with rapid arpeggios up and down the instrument. The movement develops with many events and twists, leading up to the climactic ending where a customer tries a rigged game but can't overcome the trickery of the Carnie. The Carnie plays tormenting music to anger the customer. The customer grows with rage and a fight emerges. The piece ends with both happy and disappointed customers and employees.

*Joe Porter – July, 2012*

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#### Performance Notes

The Traveling Carnival was originally composed for Vibraphone, Strings, Drumset and Percussion. I have left the pizzicato and arco marking in the parts, helping the marimbists articulate the passages. For example it would be appropriate to play some of the pizzicato passages with light bouncy strokes and some of the arco passages with heavier strokes.

The drumset part of this concerto is not to be taken literally. The player should approach the music as a roadmap and feel free to embellish and enhance the music, much like a jazz combo drummer. However, special attention should be raised to never over balance the marimbas and vibraphone.

In the solo vamp in movement I, there is an optional trading fours with the drumset. If any of the marimbas would also like to solo, that is fine as well.

In the second movement I have left the dynamics of the upper three marimbas fairly blank. The idea is to match the intensity of the soloist at all times, creating a freer environment for the soloist to shape phrases.

The approximate length of the piece is 19 minutes.

# The Traveling Carnival - Concerto for Vibraphone

Score

Version for Percussion Ensemble

## I - Opening Night

Joe Porter

Freely, Rubato ♩ = 60-70

Two bows  
Motor on  
(x) = Strike with wood or plastic ends of bows

Vibraphone

Vib. 9 RH to single mallet, strike (♦) with rattan  
RH to two mallets  
LH remain bow

Vib. 16 LH to two mallets  
3 accel. 3

Vib. 23 rit. accel. 5  
p cresc.

Vib. 28 Moderato  
f p p cresc. f p

Vib. 33 accel. 7 7 7 3 3  
f p f p

Vib. 37 Moderato mf 3 3 3 3 3 3 rit. 3 3 3 3  
f p p

Vib. 42 accel. 7 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3  
f p p cresc.

D. S. 42 pp 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3



# Opening Night

6

89

Vib.

Mar. I

Mar. II

Mar. III

B Mar. I

B Mar. II

D. S.

Perc

**E** Afro-Cuban 12/8 Feel  
Solo Vamp (Optional Trade 4's with Drumset)

94

Vib.

Mar. I

Mar. II

Mar. III

B Mar. I

B Mar. II

D. S.

Perc

Fm7 Bbm7 Fm7

pizz. *mf*

*mf* pizz.

*mf* pizz.

*mf* pizz.

*mf* pizz.

*mf* (Play bell pattern on shell of floor tom)

(Surdo)

*mf* Congas (low & high)

*mp*

# Opening Night

99 Fm7 F7 B $\flat$ m7 B $\flat$ m7 Gm7(b5) C7 Fm7

Vib. 

Mar. I 

Mar. II 

Mar. III 

B Mar. I 

B Mar. II 

D. S. 

Perc 

104 Gm7(b5) A $\flat$ 7 D $\flat$ 7 C7 Fm7

Vib. 

Mar. I 

Mar. II 

Mar. III 

B Mar. I 

B Mar. II 

D. S. 

Perc 

*mf* (Conga All Bass Tones in Centre)

*mf* (Suggested Unison Sticking) (L R L L R L R)

*mf* (Low Surdo)



**F** (♩ = ♩.)

Vib.

Mar. I <sup>109</sup> (R/R) (R/R) \* Optional Tacet

Mar. II

Mar. III

B Mar. I

B Mar. II

D. S. <sup>109</sup>

Perc <sup>109</sup>



Vib. <sup>117</sup>

Mar. I <sup>117</sup>

D. S. <sup>117</sup>

Perc <sup>117</sup>

Opening Night

124

Vib.

Mar. I

Mar. II

Mar. III

B Mar. I

B Mar. II

D. S.

Perc

\* If Tacet Re-entry

(R/R)

Measures 124-130. Vibraphone and Maracas I play a melodic line. Maracas II, III, B Mar. I, and B Mar. II play a rhythmic accompaniment. Drums and Percussion play a steady pattern. Maracas I has a re-entry instruction.

131

Vib.

Mar. I

Mar. II

Mar. III

B Mar. I

B Mar. II

D. S.

Perc

rit. rit. rit. a tempo

(R L L R L L R)

mf

Measures 131-136. Vibraphone and Maracas I play a melodic line. Maracas II, III, B Mar. I, and B Mar. II play a rhythmic accompaniment. Drums and Percussion play a steady pattern. Vibraphone has a re-entry instruction.

# Opening Night

10

**G** (♩=♩)  
Samba Feel

Vib. *f*

Mar. I *mf*

Mar. II *mf*

Mar. III *f*

B Mar. I *mf*

B Mar. II *mf*

D. S. *mf*

Perc *mf* (Small Shaker) (Play)

*mf* (Low Surdo)

136

2 3 4

Vib. *f*

Mar. I *mf*

Mar. II *mf*

Mar. III *f*

B Mar. I *mf*

B Mar. II *mf*

D. S. *mf*

Perc *mf* (Small Shaker) (Play)

*mf* (Low Surdo)

140

5 6 7

143

Vib.

Mar. I

Mar. II

Mar. III

B Mar. I

B Mar. II

D. S.

Perc

Sizzle Cymbal  
L.V

143

Vib.

B Mar. I

B Mar. II

*mf*

*mf*

*mf*

151

Vib.

B Mar. I

B Mar. II

Rides, Games and Trickery

64 *rit.* ----- **H** [Cadenza] Adagio ♩ = 40

Vib. *p*

Mar. I *ff* niente

Mar. II *ff* niente

Mar. III *ff* niente

B Mar. 1 *ff* niente

B Mar. 2 *ff* niente

D. S. *ff* niente

Perc *f* *Tam-Tam* (Only Concert B.D is rolled) niente

68 *accel.* ----- (♩ = 120)

Vib. *cresc.*

70


73

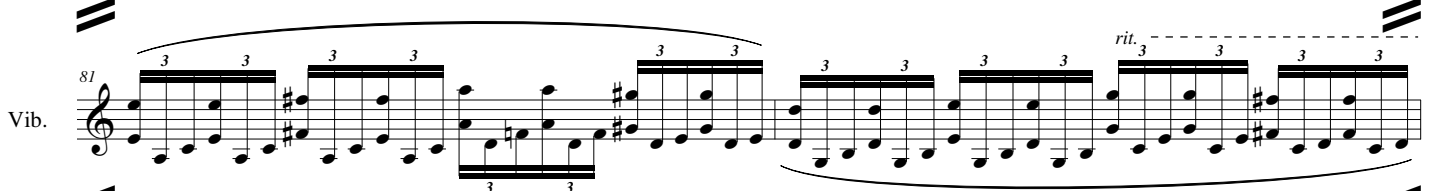
75

77

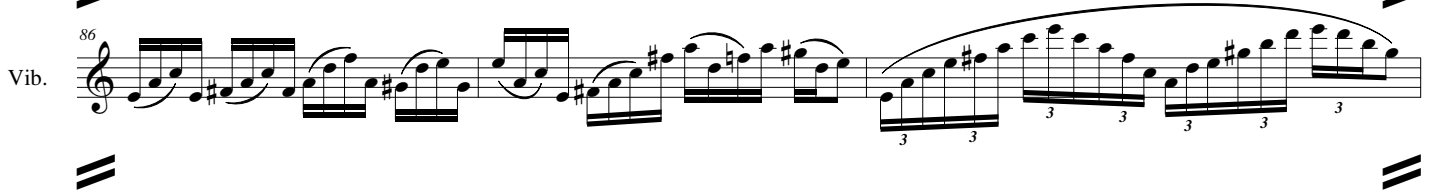
# Rides, Games and Trickery

8

Vib. 79 

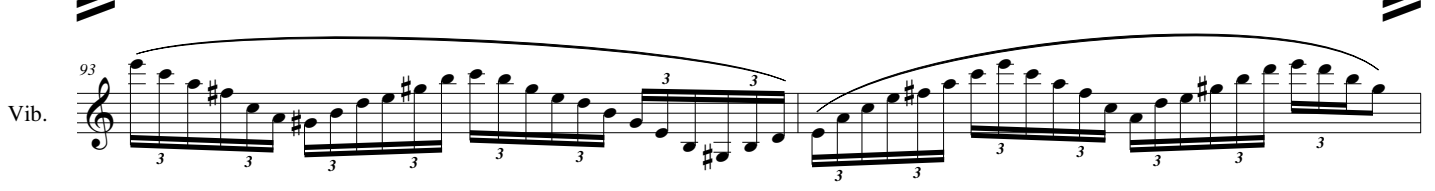
Vib. 81 

Vib. 83 


Vib. 86 

Vib. 89 

Vib. 91 

Vib. 93 

Vib. 95 

D. S. 95 

*mf*

**I**

Mar. I. *f*

Mar. II *f*

B Mar. I *f*

D. S. *mf* Concert B.D

Perc 2 3 4 5 6 7

**J**

Mar. I. *f*

Mar. II *mf*

Mar. III *mf*

B Mar. I *f*

B Mar. 2 *mf*

D. S. *mf*

Perc *mp* (Small Shaker play until m. 137)

Rides, Games and Trickery

111

Mar. I.

Mar. II

Mar. III

B Mar. 1

B Mar. 2

D. S.

Perc

115

Mar. I.

Mar. II

Mar. III

B Mar. 1

B Mar. 2

D. S.

Perc

**K**

*f*

*f*

*f*

*f*

*f*

*mf*

*mp*



Rides, Games and Trickery

L

Musical score for measures 121-126. The score includes parts for Vibraphone (Vib.), three Maracas (Mar. I, II, III), two Bass Maracas (B Mar. 1, 2), Double Bass (D. S.), and Percussion (Perc.). The Vibraphone part features a melodic line with slurs and accents. The Maracas parts consist of rhythmic patterns. The Bass Maracas parts have a steady bass line. The Double Bass part has a rhythmic pattern with slurs. The Percussion part has a simple rhythmic pattern. Dynamics include *f* and *mf*. A rehearsal mark 'L' is placed above measure 121.

Musical score for measures 127-132. The score includes parts for Vibraphone (Vib.), three Maracas (Mar. I, II, III), two Bass Maracas (B Mar. 1, 2), Double Bass (D. S.), and Percussion (Perc.). The Vibraphone part continues with a melodic line. The Maracas parts continue with rhythmic patterns. The Bass Maracas parts continue with a steady bass line. The Double Bass part continues with a rhythmic pattern. The Percussion part continues with a simple rhythmic pattern. Dynamics include *mf*. A double bar line is present at the end of measure 132.

Rides, Games and Trickery

12

M

Vib.

133 *mf*

Mar. I *f*

Mar. II *f*

Mar. III *f*

B Mar. 1 *f*

B Mar. 2 *f*

D. S. 133

Perc 133 *mf*

Rhythm with Drumset

Vib. 137 *f*

Mar. I 137

Mar. II 137

Mar. III 137

B Mar. 1 137

B Mar. 2 137

D. S. 137 *Solo/Feature with Vibes: Same as before*

Perc 137 *(Shaker stop)*

**N** Bossa Nova Feel (From Mvt I)

(no rit.)

141

Vib. *f*

Mar. I *mf*

Mar. II *mf*

Mar. III *mf*

B Mar. 1 *mf* pizz.

B Mar. 2 *mf* pizz.

D. S. *mf*

Perc *mf* (Clave)

145

Vib.

Mar. I

Mar. II

Mar. III

B Mar. 1

B Mar. 2

D. S.

Perc **2**

Rides, Games and Trickery

14

149

Vib.

Mar. I.

Mar. II.

Mar. III.

B Mar. 1.

B Mar. 2.

D. S.

Perc

153

O Driving!

Vib.

Mar. I.

Mar. II.

Mar. III.

B Mar. 1.

B Mar. 2.

D. S.

Perc

*f*

*f*

*f*

*f*

*f* (Bass Tones on High Conga)

*mf* (Low Surdo)

Rides, Games and Trickery

157

Vib.

Mar. I.

Mar. II

Mar. III

B Mar. 1

B Mar. 2

D. S.

Perc

**P**

Vib.

161

Mar. I.

Mar. II

Mar. III

B Mar. 1

B Mar. 2

D. S.

161 *f* (Bass Tones on Low Conga)

Perc

*f*

