



PERCUSSIVE NOTES

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Suite Lounge

Luigi Morleo

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Morleo Editore

Instrumentation: (4 players) vibraphone, 5.0-octave marimba, timpani, drumset

Groovy, baby! "Suite Lounge" consists of three movements using various styles, including a bossa nova, jungle, and a "bossa-ish" 3/4 feel. The piece is characterized by several unifying factors: simple harmonies, repetitive forms, and groove-oriented rhythmic patterns.

The vibraphone is the primary melodic voice, with the marimba providing harmonic, bass line, and occasional melodic support. The timpani also functions as the bass voice and, in addition, uses the center of the drum to provide a rhythmic ostinato requiring some quasi-drumset style coordination. The drumset part functions in a repetitive, non-interactive, manner. Phrase endings where fills would typically occur are often replaced with the drums "laying out," creating a sense of propulsion in the subsequent section. Four-mallet techniques are applicable to the keyboard parts and, although they require some rhythmic in-

dependence, are not terribly demanding. The drumset notation is confusing at times, as non-standard notation is used, but not explained via a notation key.

"Bossa" is the most attainable of the three movements and would provide a nice introduction to elements of Brazilian music such as the standard bossa nova beat as well as the partido-alto rhythm. "Jungle" is characterized by a very cool quasi-jungle style drum groove that will require a more seasoned player due to the coordination involved. The vib and marimba parts interlock nicely throughout and create a cohesive, syncopated line. The vibes are the most rhythmically active in "Minuetto," utilizing triplet and 5:2 rhythms in 3/4 time.

The piece has some nice moments and I enjoyed the light, groovy feel captured by Morleo throughout. What I found most intriguing besides the groove elements was the interaction created between the voices. Unlike minimalist music, however, where a sense of evolution and development occurs, the repetition and simplicity here creates a lack of variety and doesn't go anywhere for me. With only two or three phrases that continually rotate, the music can start to feel stagnant in the context of a four- to five-minute movement.

That said, this would be a quick read for most high school groups with good rhythm skills and a solid drumset player. Adding some opportunities for improvisation and allowing the players some interpretive freedom within their parts would add a lot in terms of interest, content, and the fun factor. Groove it, don't lose it!

—John Willmarth