

The Rosauero Marimba Concerto: A Formal Analysis

BY WAN-CHUN LIAO

MOVEMENT I. SAUDAÇÃO (GREETING)

"Saudacao" is a lively movement with highly contrasting characteristics, dynamics, and rhythms. It has a ternary form with large A, B, and A' sections. Traditional concertos begin with a sonata form as first movement. One can see traces for that plan here, since sonata forms are complex ternary forms anyway. But Rosauero's movement has all new material in its B section, in place of a standard development section. The movement also has an introduction and coda. Figure 1 is a map of the movement's form.

The opening theme establishes a strong rhythmic ostinato played by the solo marimba and lower strings. The repetition of the ostinato allows listeners to comprehend the complex meter changes before the melody is introduced. By alternating the time signatures of 6/8, 5/8, 6/8, and 7/8, Rosauero creates a restless character in the movement. The violins in fourths and fifths reinforce this continuous change of meter. The orchestra, in alternating meters of 3/4 and 4/4, introduces theme B, mm. 25–28 with ritornello, based on the whole-tone scale. The transitional materials feature a dialogue of rhythmic fragments between the soloist and the orchestra.

Section B (mm. 55–113) is written in a linear style that contrasts with the polyphonic style presented in the A section. In this section, the marimba imitates an improvisation similar to a jazz solo as the double bass plays a walking pizzicato line to reinforce the jazz atmosphere.

The part from measure 59 to 62 is an arpeggiated section. The two most important notes in the ascending arpeggios are the root (A) and fifth (E). The notes in the A minor arpeggio are root (A), minor third (C), augmented fourth (D-sharp) resolving to the fifth (E), minor seventh (G), and major seventh (G-sharp) resolving to the tonic

(A). The use of this sequence of notes indicates the presence of the blues scale, which gives the jazz flavor to the passage. Rosauero's use of jazz concepts in the section is very clear. This is technically the most difficult section in the movement for the marimbist, because he or she not only needs to keep the accuracy and musical contour of the phrase, but also needs to keep the tempo in line with the basic rhythm presented by the orchestra. At theme E (mm. 83–98), Rosauero creates dialogues between string instruments based on the pentatonic scale, while the marimba plays an ostinato utilizing the "dead stroke" technique.

There is an optional section from mm. 91–98. This section is difficult for the or-

chestra, and some orchestras may not be able to perform it at an acceptable level. To maintain the quality of the performance this section (which is marked on the score as VI-DE) can be omitted.

At theme A' (mm. 131–146), the orchestra restates the primary theme with marimba. The climax of this movement is followed by a small coda containing elements of the transitional theme, finishing with a unison statement.

MOVEMENT II. LAMENTO (LAMENT)

The second movement depicts a romantic atmosphere in a typical "lament mood," as the title suggests. The movement is in ternary form with an expressive and ro-

FIGURE 1. FORMAL STRUCTURE OF MOVEMENT I: TERNARY (ABA) FORM

Introduction (mm. 1–8)

Theme: Rhythmic Motive
Key: A Minor
Measures: 1–8

Section A (mm. 9–54)

Theme:	A	B	A	C
Key:	A minor	Whole-Tone Scale	A minor	Whole-Tone Scale
Measures:	9–24	25–28	29–44	45–54

Section B (mm. 55–113)

Theme:	D	E	D'
Key:	Arpeggios	Pentatonic Scale	Arpeggios
Measures:	55–82	83–98	99–113

Section A' (mm. 114–146)

Theme:	A	C	B	A
Key:	A minor	Whole-Tone Scale	Whole-Tone Scale	A minor
Measures:	114–121	122–126	127–130	131–146

Coda (mm. 147–153)

Theme: A
Key: Whole-Tone Scale/A Minor
Measures: 147–153

mantic character. It is mostly in A minor and 6/4 meter. Figure 2 presents a diagram of the movement.

The orchestra starts the movement with a sustained *pianissimo* tremolo to create a pedal tone throughout the first section (theme A, mm. 1–11). With the orchestra, the marimbist is required to play a one-handed roll in the left hand while the right hand plays the melodic theme.

At theme B (mm. 12–21), the soloist's part consists of constant sextuplets. The lyrical sixteenth-note melodic line contains frequent altered notes, demanding the utmost accuracy. The main melodic line is introduced by the soloist's left hand in the lower register, requiring some challenging hand-crossing motions while the right hand plays a sextuplet accompaniment.

Theme C (mm. 22–45) is an Andante Molto Expressivo section. The theme is based on the symmetrical shape of the diatonic scale on the keyboard. The melody is presented on the solo marimba by rolling all the notes. The upper and lower voices move in contrary motion while the inner voices remain on the notes G and A

throughout the section. At theme C1 (mm. 46–67), the orchestra plays the theme from letter C while the marimba plays a counter-melody in octaves. The accuracy of the octaves is crucial for the marimbist in this section. In mm. 68–70, the marimba plays a solo descending diatonic scale to serve as a transition to the return of the first and second themes.

The last three bars of this movement form a coda. The marimba and the orchestra fade out with the same ostinato pattern and effects used in the first section of the movement. After the sentimental and relaxed atmosphere created by this movement, the tension rises during the next two movements, leading the concerto to a powerful finale.

FIGURE 2. FORMAL STRUCTURE OF MOVEMENT II: ABCAB FORM

Section A (mm. 1–11) and Section B (mm. 12–21)

Theme:	A	B
Key:	A minor	A minor
Measures:	1–11	12–21

Section C (mm. 22–69)

Theme:	C	C1 (Variation of C)	Transition
Key:	A minor	A minor	A minor
Measures:	22–45	46–67	68–69

Section A (mm. 70–70) and Section B (mm. 80–90)

Theme:	A	B
Key:	A minor	A minor
Measures:	70–70	80–90



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MOVEMENT III. DANCA (DANCE)

The characteristic of this movement is as the title suggests: "Danca" is not only an invitation to dance, but a testament to the beauty of life as well. The melody is lyrical and beautiful, and an inspiration to the imagination of listeners. Figure 3 shows the movement's form.

This movement is in ternary form, beginning with an introduction (mm. 1–12) us-

ing the C suspended chord. While the orchestra introduces the opening motive, the solo marimba plays the outside lateral stroke, one of the stylistic features of Rosauro's technique. Section A begins at bar 13 and the marimba continues the use of the outside lateral stroke in playing the melody. The melodic material of this section is developed starting in bar 18, and the ascending chord progression serves as a

transition to A1 with a deceptive cadence. A1 begins quietly at bar 26 in A minor, and the right hand changes to double strokes while the left hand maintains outside lateral strokes. During the next twelve bars, the musical tension keeps building, finally resolving back to C major in bar 34. This entire section has technical issues that need to be addressed such as hand position and mallet placement.

Section B begins at bar 42 immediately after section A and with no transition. In contrast to section A, the tempo is slightly slower and has a more grounded feel, unlike section A's light and flowing character. The key is C minor. The orchestra and soloist play the canon material in a tutti, four-bar statement. The material is passed around the orchestra in canon while the soloist finally plays the melody in octaves, leading into an ascending sixteenth-note transition at bar 57 into theme C. Theme C starts at bar 61 in C Dorian and 3/4 time. The marimba establishes the main melody by playing energetic sixteenth-note passages in octaves while the strings support with eighth-note and quarter-note patterns over a C Dorian chord. Following Theme C is a transition section (mm. 73–80), which consists of the marimbist playing a descending chromatic scale in double strokes while the strings accompany on a diminished seventh chord.

Theme C and its subsequent transition section are repeated again from mm. 81–104. However, this time theme C's main melody is presented an octave higher and the transition section is expanded to include a chromatic scale and a diminished chord.

At bar 93 the marimba plays rising thirds outlining a diminished chord, followed by a descending sixteenth-note passage very similar to the transition material found at bar 57. This leads to a brief return of the canon material at bar 105 to function as a transition to the recapitulation of section A at bar 111. This is followed by a reprise of the introduction material at 142 as a coda. The movement as a whole with its placement of themes and sections is almost symmetrical.

MOVEMENT IV. DESPEDIDA (FAREWELL)

The driving fourth movement is in variation form. It features a *prestissimo* ostinato pattern, which is metrically punctuated by the marimbist's left hand throughout the whole movement. The constructive ele-

FIGURE 3. FORMAL STRUCTURE OF MOVEMENT III: TERNARY FORM (ABA' FORM)

Introduction (mm. 1–12)

Theme: Intro. Material
Key: C Suspended
Measures: 1–12

Section A (mm. 13–41)

Theme: A	A1
Key: C Major	A minor
Measures: 13–25	26–41

Section B (mm. 42–110)

Theme: B (Canon)	Transition	C	Transition
Key: C minor	C minor	C Dorian	Chromatic Scale/ Dim. Chord
Measures: 42–56	57–60	61–72	73–80
Theme: C	Transition		B (Canon)
Key: C Dorian	Chromatic Scale/Dim. Chord		C minor
Measures: 81–88	89–94		105–110

Section A' (mm. 111–141)

Theme: A	A1
Key: C Major	A minor
Measures: 111–125	126–141

Coda (mm. 142–153)

Theme: Intro. Material
Key: C Suspended
Measures: 142–153

ment of this movement is similar to the basso ostinato variation because the short bass line repeats essentially unchanged in each variation, resulting in a continuous variation form.¹ Figure 4 is a map of the movement's form.

This relentless variation movement is the most rhythmic movement of the concerto, as well as the most challenging for most marimba players because of the left hand's fast and ceaseless ostinato pattern.

The introduction sets up the meter change pattern of 6/8, 2/4, 6/8, 3/4 with the marimba's ascending line of quarter notes and dotted quarter notes in rising fourths (the circle of fourths). A short marimba cadenza follows, based on the diminished scale.

The primary theme begins at bar 16 in C minor. The marimba plays the ostinato and

melodic material while the strings accompany with quarter-note figures to keep time. The marimbist's left hand plays the eighth-note pattern, and the right hand plays the melody first in octaves then in fourths at bar 32.

Variation 1 begins at bar 52, wherein the left hand continues its pattern while the right hand plays a syncopated variation of the melody. At bar 84, the marimba melody ends and the left hand's pattern continues, transitioning to variation 2. Variation 2 begins at bar 88, and is an ensemble solo with the marimba keeping the ostinato pattern to accompany. The ensemble plays the melodic material in the format of a dialogue between the upper and lower strings.

Variation 3 follows at bar 116, and the marimba rests while the ensemble plays the melody in its original format. The marimba

reenters at bar 132 to begin variation 3's closing material, playing very fast sixteenth notes that outline a melody similar to the original. The marimba line descends to a low C, where the sixteenths transform to a roll that fades into the cadenza. The cadenza is a reprise of the important themes from all the movements of the concerto. It transitions to the recapitulation with the canon theme from Movement III.

At bar 157, the introduction and primary theme are repeated. The closing material begins at 185 with the marimba playing another fast, sixteenth-note based, descending melody. A grand pause precedes the final statement starting at bar 201, which is a sixteenth-note based descent along the C minor scale. The intensity continues to rise until the marimba plays a descending chromatic scale ending strongly on the low C to finish the concerto.

FIGURE 4. FORMAL STRUCTURE OF MOVEMENT IV: VARIATION FORM

Introduction and Cadenza (mm. 1–15)

Theme:	Intro.	Cadenza
Key:	C Minor (Circle of 4ths)	Diminished Seventh Chord
Measures:	1–12	13–15

Primary Theme (mm. 16–51)

Theme:	A	A1	Transition
Key:	C Minor	C minor	C Minor
Measures:	16–31	32–47	48–51

Variation 1 (mm. 52–87)

Theme:	B	Transition
Key:	C Minor	C Minor
Measures:	52–84	84–87

Variation 2 (mm. 88–115)

Theme:	C (Ensemble Solo)
Key:	C Pedal
Measures:	88–115

Variation 3 (mm. 116–155)

Theme:	A (Ensemble Solo)	A' (Closing Material)
Key:	C Pedal	C Minor
Measures:	88–115	132–155

Cadenza

Introduction and Primary Theme (mm. 157–200)

Theme:	Introduction	A	A' (Closing Material)	G.P.
Key:	C minor	C minor	C Minor	
Measures:	157–168	169–184	185–199	200

Coda (mm. 201–209)

Theme:	Descending C Minor Scale
Key:	C Minor
Measures:	201–209

ENDNOTE

1. Herbert Viecenz, "Concerto." *The New Harvard Dictionary of Music*, ed. Don Michael Randel (Massachusetts: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1996), 902–906.

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