

A Look At Ney Rosauero's
Educational Series For Percussion

Dr. Domenico E. Zarro
Dumont, New Jersey, U.S.A.
DEZarro@aol.com

Dr. Ney Gabriel Rosauro is internationally known as a prolific composer and performer of percussion. His compositions have been performed by some of the world's leading artists and orchestras, such as: Evelyn Glennie, The London Symphony Orchestra, Kammersolisten Zurich, The Houston Ballet, Scottish Symphony Orchestra, Bayerischer Rundfunk, NHK Television Tokyo and the BBC in London. In 1990 he was named Musician of The Year by the Musical Press of South Brazil for his solo album "Marimba Brasileira" and has presented concerts and clinics in 30 countries. In addition, his "Concerto for Marimba and Orchestra" (Opus 12) is the most performed and recorded marimba concerto of the decade, and arguably of this century (Weiss, 1999, pg. 59). What is not as well known is Rosauro's devotion to percussion pedagogy.

Pedagogical Inspiration

Rosauro was born in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil on October 24, 1952. He began his musical studies on the guitar and double bass at the age of 12. In 1977, Rosauro attended a summer music camp in Brasilia where he heard his first solo percussion concert performed by Luiz D'Anunciacao. He was astonished with all the various sounds that percussion instruments could create, especially the harmonic possibilities of the mallet instruments. From that point on, Rosauro gave up his bass studies, and began studying percussion with D'Anunciacao. In 1980, he studied percussion and pedagogy with Professor Siegfried Fink at the Hochschule for Music in Wurzburg, Germany, where in 1987 he completed his Masters Degree. From 1990 to 1992, Rosauro pursued his doctorate at the

University of Miami (where he is currently Director of Percussion Studies) under the close supervision of Professor Fred Wickstrom, becoming the first Brazilian to be awarded the Doctor of Musical Arts Degree in Percussion.

Rosauro's interest in percussion pedagogy began while he was a student of D'Anunciacao. His inspiration came from the lack of percussion method books and literature available to the Brazilian student. In response, Rosauro composed various exercises and etudes for percussion that focused upon specific techniques he needed to acquire. Rosauro further developed these exercises and etudes into formal methods after attaining his degrees in Percussion Performance, Pedagogy and Composition at the Hochschule fur Music. Over a period of six years, he tested and perfected these exercises while working with students of various levels. This developed into his "Educational Series", which is a collection of method books and graduated percussion works for the elementary, intermediate and advanced student.

Method Books

The "Complete Method for Snare Drum" is a compilation of four books in one. Each "Level", as Rosauro refers to it, consists of three distinct sections: Part I is daily technique, Part II is progressive exercises, and Part III are duets that incorporate those techniques developed in Parts I & II. Level One focuses upon Single, Simultaneous and Alternating Strokes as well as Accents. Level Two stresses Alternate and Repeated Strokes along with Repeated Accents and Odd

Group ings (tuplets). Level Three develops Flams, Drags, Double Strokes and Syncopation. Level Four incorporates Four and Five Stroke Drags (Ruffs) and Multiple Bounce Strokes (Symphonic Roll).

Sticking patterns in book one of this method do not follow the traditional format present in most prominent methods (R, L, R, L etc.). Instead, Rosauero differentiates each hand by the position of the note stem. Notes are not placed on a staff, but on a single line. The notes atop of the line (with stems facing upward) are for one hand, and the notes on the bottom of the line (with stems facing down) are for the other. Thus, students may find this format easier to read without having to correspond a letter to a given note.

“Beginning Exercises and Studies for Two Mallets” is intended to be studied in conjunction with the “Complete Method for Snare Drum.” As in his snare method, Rosauero focuses attention toward technical development and not on how to read standard notation. Thus, before one can begin study with either method, the student should have a firm understanding of note values, fluency with treble clef and a grasp of major and minor scales. Even though knowledge of the aforementioned is required, each method begins with simplistic melodic and rhythmic exercises that gradually increase in complexity. Therefore, an instructor can use a method that develops such knowledge and compliment it with the exercises in either of Rosauero’s books.

This mallet method is divided into three sections. Part I consists of 14 exercises (which is divided into two sections) of diatonic, chromatic and arpeggiated patterns incorporated with double stops, double stickings and leaps in either hand. It should be noted that this section parallels technical exercises.

presented in the Snare Drum Method. For instance, Rosauro incorporates ostinato patterns to develop the simultaneous stroke as presented in the Snare Drum Method. Furthermore, the exercises in this section are designed for the performer to develop their Kinesthetic Memory on the instrument. In addition, the final four exercises of Part I can be combined with the three exercises (“Variations”) of Part II. These exercises are patterns to be memorized and applied to all major and minor scales. Part III consists of 12 etudes of graduating complexity that incorporates all of the techniques addressed in Parts I & II.

Though not a traditional method book, “10 Beginning Studies for Multiple Percussion” are graduated concert pieces based off of the snare drum and mallet methods. Each piece increases in rhythmic complexity with varying instrumentation of no more than four instruments. Therefore, the purpose behind this book is to enlighten the student on how to read and prepare multiple percussion works. Thus, developing one’s technique on how to adjust to performing on instruments that vary in size, timbre and response at any given moment.

Complimenting Rosauro’s “Educational Series” are numerous compositions for marimba, vibraphone, multiple percussion and percussion ensemble that incorporate the techniques addressed in the above volumes. Such works are: “Variations for Four Tom Toms” (a continuation of “10 Beginning Studies for Multiple Percussion” which can also be transcribed for four timpani), “Three Moods” (for marimba or steel drum; is a continuation of “Beginning Exercises and Studies for Two Mallets”), “Seven Brazilian Children Songs” (intended as an introduction to 4 mallet playing on the marimba), “Ten Studies

for Two Timpani”, “Vibe Etudes and Songs” (for elementary vibe performers) and “Sonatina for Snare Drum” to name but a few.

Rosauro stresses that his music is written with the percussionist in mind first and foremost and further states,

before I publish any of my pieces, I have played them several times and made any necessary corrections.... My music has a lot of feeling to the phrases. Students will learn how to play ritardandos, accelerandos and also how to develop expression.... Too many pieces focus just on notes, so students don’t have the chance to make nice music and enjoy the beauty of it. (Weiss, 1999, pg. 60)

Conclusion

The objective of his “Educational Series” is to present a sequential teaching method that addresses technical development from the earliest stages for a multitude of percussion instruments. Parenthetical to these method books are exercises that address common technical problems that are prevalent to all percussion instruments. Thus, the technical goals are the same: hand position, stick/mallet delivery, fluidity of the hands, muscle dexterity and most importantly, an equal balance of both hands.

Therefore, each part of Rosauro’s “Educational Series” is intertwined by its progressive step by step concept. For example, the “Complete Method for Snare Drum”, “Beginning Exercises and Studies for Two Mallets” and “10 Beginning Studies for Multiple Percussion” are to be studied concurrently. Even

though each method focuses on a different percussion instrument, the technical requirements are similar. Thus, each method progresses gradually so the student's reading ability, as well as the student's technical ability, can easily be correlated from instrument to instrument.

Rosauro's "Educational Series" is published by Pro Percussao Publications, and is distributed by Mallet Works (www.malletworks.com). A complete listing of Rosauro's compositions and pedagogical works can be found at: www.neyrosauro.com.

Weiss, L. (1999, October). Ney rosauro: Composer and percussionist. Percussive Notes, 37, 59-60.