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AN ADVENTURE IN SOUND

PERCUSSION in HI-FI

Conducted By David Carroll

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ORCHESTRA CONDUCTED BY

DAVID CARROLL

The cymbal's shimmer, the virile woof of a huge bass drum—these are the thrilling sounds of percussion. Nothing in the realm of music is more challenging and rewarding to performer and listener alike.

In this album, Mercury Records has exploited the vast range of an extensive percussion section. Four composer-arrangers were commissioned to prepare material for an orchestra, under the direction of David Carroll.

INSTRUMENTS

Vibraphones, marimbas, xylophones, tympani, tam-tam, celesta, glockenspiel, orchestra bells, castanets, tom toms, triangle, maracas, bass drum, traps, greco cymbals, hand cymbals, claves, cathedral chimes, snare drum, tambourine, conga drum, guiro, cabaza, timbales, bongo drums and field drum.

These were performed by six percussionists: Dale Anderson, Hubert Anderson, Bobby Christian, Sam Denov, Harry Brabec and Frank Rullo.

PIANO Caesar Giovannini and Robert Acri CONTRABASS Harold Siegel
HARP Peter Eagle GUITARS Earl Backus and John Gray

When all these instruments were assembled June 4, 1956 in Studio A of Universal Recording Corporation, Chicago, they filled the room almost to overflowing. Engineer Bill Putnam outdid himself with a fine job of mike placement and balance, achieving the superlative presence and separation which captures these diverse sounds so faithfully on this record.

Two of the percussionists performing on the session also contributed to the music. *Spanish Symphonique* was composed and orchestrated by Bobby Christian. The first movement, *The Pyrenees*, opens with an explosive burst of tympani, xylophone and bells. The theme passes through an ensemble interplay, then into the harp and piccolo xylophone; it ends in a stirring bolero which builds to a dramatic finale. The second movement, *Madrid*, is a romantic Spanish tango section featuring the marimba. "Bull Fight", the third movement, opens with a misterioso theme in piano, marimba, and bowed contrabass. A solo snare drum begins its exposition which develops into an explosive fugue between the drum section. The finale, *Flamenco*, culminates the composition with a reprise running the gamut of Spanish sounds.

Lecuona's *Jungle Drums* is opened by arranger Christian with the tuned logs; the melody is picked up by the piccolo xylophone. After a vivid audio depiction of authentic jungle drums, he raises the tempo and presents his swinging vibraphone improvisation. The band ends with an extensive interplay of drums, topped off with a resounding stroke on the tam-tam.

Percussionist Frank Rullo both composed and scored *The Chimes of Swing*. He is featured on this happy number, playing his intricate solo on the cathedral chimes with a wooden mallet in each hand.

Discussion in Percussion, composed and orchestrated by Mike Simpson, is made up of three sections which are performed without separation. It opens with the lovely *Quiet*

Talk, the theme being introduced by a vibraphone played with its motor turned off. A guitar next states the theme, punctuated by piano, bells, marimba, xylophone and bells. There begins a Stravinsky-like interplay of percussion ending in a highly amplified note from an 18" cymbal, reminiscent of the take-off of a jet airplane. *Chatter* ensues with a mixture of high percussion sounds from the orchestra bells, maracas, tambourine, triangle and cymbals; more Latin American rhythm instruments are introduced, and they have an animated "discussion." The mood changes with the introduction of the snare drum, which is played in a legitimate style until the parody of "Yankee Doodle" signals one of the most impressive drum battles extant. This section, *Controversy*, ends aptly with a descending tympani beat like the tired sigh of a runner at the end of a race.

Also composed and arranged by Mike Simpson, *Cricket* is an effervescent creation in an Afro-Cuban vein. Happily combining elements of jazz and the concert idiom, it begins simply and soon develops into a fascinating fugue for the melodic instruments. Of particular interest is the tympani work just prior the recapitulation; engineer Putnam has maintained superlative presence on these low percussive tones.

Hell's Bells, orchestrated by Mike Simpson, is a study in the eerie side of percussion. Opening with triangle and harp, the ensemble is brought in to describe a musical scene which could have come directly out of Dante's *Inferno*. Two xylophones, playing a half-step apart, take up the melody and pass it on to the cathedral chimes, which swing out in malicious glee. The piano carries on, later joined by xylophones which chatter an accompaniment. After some delicate snare drumming with wire brushes, the mode changes to minor and the xylophones finish out the band with provoking elision of the melody that carries your interest right up to the last note.

In Rodgers and Hammerstein's *Bali Ha'i*, arranger Carl Stevens has treated the beautiful melody delicately, featuring guitar and marimba. Peter Eagle plays the lovely harp solo.

Malaguena, also scored by Carl Stevens, is transcribed for percussion in the traditional Lecuono style, featuring pianist Caesar Giovannini. The solo section is performed by Bobby Christian on marimba, with harp cadenza by Eagle, and leads into the stirring finale by the ensemble.

HI-FI FACTS

In recording this album a battery of Telefunken microphones were used; type U-47, type #201, and several of the new Telefunkens known as model ELA-M221, which, at the time of the session, were the only microphones of this type in use outside of Germany.

The recording sessions were held in the old Universal studios and some degree of reverberation was added by using a slight amount of echo when required. Recording was done on Ampex machines at 30 inches per second and transferred to disc with heated stylii, using Cook feed-back cutter heads driven by special 60 watt amplifiers designed and built by Universal.

MERCURY

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1. HELL'S BELLS (Kassel) (Leo Feist—ASCAP) 2:22 2. BALI
HA'I (Rodgers-Hammerstein) (Chappell—ASCAP) 2:45 3. THE
CHIMES OF SWING (Frank Rullo) (Pure Music—BMI) 2:16
4. MALAGUENA (Lecuona) (E. B. Marks—BMI) 2:59 5. DIS-
CUSSION IN PERCUSSION (Mike Simpson) (Pure Music—
BMI) Part I—Quiet Talk (Mike Simpson) 1:32; Part II—
Chatter (Mike Simpson) 2:06; Part III—Controversy
(Mike Simpson) 1:35

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1. THE CRICKET (Mike Simpson) (Constellation Music—BMI)
2:38 2. JUNGLE DRUMS (Lecuona-Lombardo-Flynn) (Marks
Music—BMI) 2:45 3. SPANISH SYMPHONIQUE—Bobby
Christian (Summit Music—ASCAP) No. I THE PYRENEES
(Bobby Christian) 2:15 No. II MADRID (Bobby Christian)
2:59 No. III BULLFIGHT (Bobby Christian) 2:06 No. IV
FINALE-FLAMENCO (Bobby Christian) 2:42

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