

**PERCUSSION
DEPARTMENT HANDBOOK
2026–2027**

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WELCOME

Welcome to the percussion department of Manhattan School of Music. It is our hope that this handbook will both answer questions you may have and guide you through your years of study at MSM. The intent is not to overwhelm but rather to organize your thoughts as to the direction your playing can develop during your short time at Manhattan School of music.

Please do read this booklet from cover to cover so that you can get a feel for the flow we hope to establish in your yearly progress.

We hope you enjoy your time of study at MSM and that it proves to be exciting, rewarding, and productive.

Sincerely,

The Manhattan School of Music Percussion Faculty

I. PLACEMENT AUDITIONS FOR ENSEMBLES

Auditions for the school's large ensembles take place at the beginning of each semester. The performance office has a list of the required repertoire. A list is also included in this handbook.

1. 1st Semester

Transferring students, returning students, and graduate students are expected to present all repertoire from the timpani and percussion audition list. Incoming freshmen should try to prepare most of the repertoire on the list or at least be ready to show skills on all percussion instruments. The auditions will take place openly so that the jury can discuss the student's progress and plans for the year.

At the conclusion of these auditions the jury will place students in the appropriate ensembles.

2. 2nd Semester

All students will be expected to play all excerpts from the audition list. If a student has a preference for timpani or percussion, he or she should indicate to the audition monitor what will be played first (i.e., either start with timpani as a preference and finish with percussion, or start with percussion as a preference and finish with timpani). If the student has no preference, this should be indicated to the monitor.

This audition will take place behind a screen. The jury will not know who is playing, as there is to be no verbal communication between the jury and the student auditioning.

Each applicant will be rated between 1 and 5 (5 being high, 1 being low). The performance office will average these ratings, and ensemble placement will be strictly by the number recorded by the jury. In the case of ties, higher standing will be given to graduate students and upperclassmen.

These two types of auditions are to give the students experience in varied audition environments.

II. EXCERPTS FOR ENSEMBLE PLACEMENT AUDITIONS

Xylophone:

Copland	Appalachian Spring
Gershwin	Porgy and Bess-Introduction
Kabalevsky	Colas Breugnon
Kodaly	Hary Janos
Shostakovich	Age of Gold Polka

Bells:

Dukas	Sorcerer's Apprentice
Glazunov	Violin Concerto
Mozart	Magic Flute
Respighi	Pines of Rome

Snare Drum:

Bartok	Concerto for Orchestra
Prokofiev	Peter and the Wolf
Prokofiev	Lt. Kije-Birth of Kije and Burial
Ravel	Bolero
Rimsky-Korsakov	Capriccio Espagnol Scheherazade 3rd and 4th movements

Cymbals:

Rachmaninoff	Piano Concerto #2
Tchaikovsky	Romeo and Juliet
General crashes at varied dynamics	

Tambourine:

Bizet	Carmen Suites #1 and #2
Dvorak	Carnival Overture
Demonstrate shake and finger roll skills	

Timpani:

Bartok	Concerto for Orchestra 4th movement
Beethoven	Symphony No. 5—3rd and 4th movements
Beethoven	Symphony No. 9—1st and 2nd movements
Brahms	Symphony No. 1—opening; 4th movement
Hindemith	Symphonic Metamorphosis—2nd movement
Tchaikovsky	Symphony No. 4—1st movement

III. CURRICULUM

1. PK0451-52/2451-52 PERCUSSION LAB

All students should be enrolled for this course of study.

The outline for the Lab Class is a full-spectrum approach to solo percussion repertoire, performance practice, stylistic discussions as well as orchestral repertoire sessions for percussion and timpani, Western and non-Western instrument workshops and lecture/demonstrations by visiting artists and clinicians. Instrument maintenance as well as stick construction and mallet wrapping will also be discussed.

Students are expected to perform regularly in the lab class be it a master class, workshop, or solo performance setting.

A number of the lab classes will be devoted to preparation for the Manhattan School of Music Marimba Project performance. The entire department participates in this public performance, which occurs yearly at the end of the fall semester. Students will discuss this program with the marimba consultant at the start of the fall semester.

2. Lesson Schedule

Lessons at MSM are unique in that they are part of a faculty team effort. All students have multiple teachers and various types of lessons mixed in as well.

The private lesson teaching schedule is carefully designed each semester with input from all teachers and students combined. Each student should have a conversation with the various teachers prior to the start of each semester regarding goals and plans for that semester. This allows for the customizing of each student's lesson plan.

3. Lamb Seminars

All students will participate in these seminars as a part of their private- lesson program. There will be four two-hour sessions per semester. Level I, Percussion Skills and Concepts, is for freshman, sophomores, and first-semester graduate students. Level II, Orchestral Repertoire Seminar, is for juniors, seniors, and graduate students. Level I will focus on physical movement that allows the percussionist the freedom to continually absorb new techniques required for the growing number of percussion instruments. Emphasis on how technique affects tone production will be made, and speed and control will begin to be observed. In Level II, application of the fundamentals of techniques, touch, and tone production will be made to specific orchestral repertoire for all instruments, always keeping in mind the musical directives of the composer. Both classes will include a packet of material designed to guide the student in practicing the topics and ideas presented in the classes.

IV. ENSEMBLES

1. Percussion Ensemble

The Manhattan School of Music Percussion Ensemble was founded in 1957 by Paul Price. The ensemble is designed to help bridge the gap between school and professional life, with special emphasis on achieving advanced playing abilities, developing a high level of concentration and artistic satisfaction. The ensemble performs classic works of the Percussion Ensemble literature on a regular basis, as well as having a deep commitment to scores written solely for the ensemble. MSM's Percussion Ensemble is known for its careful attention to detail surrounding the performance of percussion literature of the time. The ensemble holds a critical place in the wide-ranging ideology of the Percussion Department. Percussion students are required to take part in the ensemble's concerts each year.

2. Jazz Department

There are opportunities for classical percussion majors to participate in the excellent Manhattan School of Music jazz department, and this is encouraged. Students may audition for ensembles, take lessons and / or courses with jazz faculty, attend master classes, and of course, play informally with students from the jazz department. For ensemble audition information, check with the jazz department. Collaborative lessons can be discussed with the percussion and jazz faculty.

3. Orchestra Principal Percussionists

The assigned principal percussionist of any orchestra in a given semester has the responsibilities of dividing and assigning parts. And for ensuring that necessary instruments are in place for all rehearsals and concerts.

Just as a professional principal percussionist, you must work closely and in a timely manner way with the Equipment Manager, the stage manager, the orchestra manager, the librarian, the conductor, and your section colleagues.

V. RECITALS

Manhattan School of Music is committed to creating an inclusive environment that permeates every aspect of our students' experience. We believe an educational environment must be rooted in Cultural Inclusion to achieve academic and artistic excellence. Cultural Inclusion at MSM includes learning and understanding individual identities and differences of people who constitute our community. Cultural Inclusion also requires the study and performance of works by and creators from a diverse range of backgrounds, including race, ethnicity, nationality, gender, able-ness, and/or sexual orientation. All MSM recitals must include a work by an underrepresented creator. The groups of underrepresented creators in percussion are Black/African Diaspora, Asian, Women, and Latinx. A link to MSMs Cultural Inclusion Resource page is here:

msmnyc.libguides.com/culturalinclusion

Recital Procedures:

- Discuss repertoire in consultation with the recital coordinator at least 12 weeks (3 months) prior to the proposed recital date
- Finalize the repertoire and possible recital dates and times with the recital coordinator
- Submit proposed dates and times to the scheduling office
- Once the date is confirmed with the scheduling office, directly notify the recital coordinator and department chair.
- If the recital is a required recital, scheduling office will send a recital approval form to the department chair for final signature.
- Schedule a recital hearing 4 weeks (1 month) prior to the recital with the recital coordinator in order to receive final review and approval. If the recital hearing is not acceptable, the recital will be cancelled.

1. Non-required Recitals

Students are encouraged, though it is not required, to give recitals in the first two years of their undergraduate degree. Most non-required recitals are given in the fall semester or early spring semester when recital space is a less of a premium. Students enrolled in the Orchestral Performance Master's Program are not required to give a recital.

2. Required Recitals-Undergraduate and Graduate Programs

Students are required to give recitals in their junior and senior years. Graduate students in the Classical Master's Program are required to give a recital each year of the two -year program. Students must be enrolled for lessons until the graduation recital and graduation jury have been successfully completed. A graduation recital and/or graduation jury does not serve as a substitute for an entrance examination to a higher degree program.

3. Doctor of Musical Arts Recitals

Consult the Associate Dean for Doctoral Studies for procedures and requirements.

VI. EISENBERG-FRIED CONCERTO COMPETITION

The guitar, harp, and percussion concerto competition is held every other year. The next one will be held in February 2028. Applications will be sent via e-mail. Students must schedule a concerto hearing one month before the concerto competition date. If the hearing is satisfactory, students will be able to submit the application form with faculty or Department Chair's signature. The hearing must present a high level of proficiency. All movements must be memorized and performed with piano accompaniment. The following concerto is ineligible: Bloomfield *Motions* for Marimba and Chamber Orchestra.

VII. LIBRARY COLLECTION

The library has a policy of purchasing new solo literature as well as standard percussion books for use. Each year, new music will be added to the collection. Percussion periodicals are also being made available. Please make good use of our library, as your interest will support the continuation of this policy. Students should feel free to make recommendations of percussion literature for library acquisition through the department chair.

VIII. INSTRUMENT CARE

Much thought goes into building the instrument collection at Manhattan School of Music, but responsibility for the equipment care begins and ends with the students. Any abuse or misuse of percussion instruments causes an unnecessary financial burden on the department and negatively affects not only your educational experience but also that of future generations of Manhattan School of Music percussionists. Take care in moving equipment—especially keyboard instruments—over and through doorways. Cover instruments after using them. Be considerate. Always lock studios and practice rooms.

No one may perform fine-tuning of timpani heads unless they have studied this and been granted permission. Any problems related to instrument maintenance should be reported promptly to the Department's Operations Manager AND Department Chair.

IX. JURY REQUIREMENTS

The end of the year jury should be viewed as a “presentation of proficiency” by the students. It should consist of 15-18 minutes of solo presentation followed by selected excerpts and /or accessory work and demonstrations for the appropriate year. (See Appendix I for the suggested repertoire.) These presentation guidelines may require cuts and arrangements of solo works so as to meet the time restraints. Every effort should be made to display these presentations in a recital like manner. All MSM juries are strongly encouraged to include at least one work by an underrepresented creator.

Materials for juries should be determined in consultations with the percussion faculty.

Year 1 and 2 Technical Examination

In addition to the yearly juries for the department, a technical exam will take place following spring break for first- and second-year students only. This exam, combined with the year-end jury will assist to more completely assess student’s technical developments and readiness to successfully complete the remainder of the departments 4-year program.

The total jury process for first- and second-year students will be comprised of 2 parts. Part 1 will be a pass/fail graded “technical exam” following spring break and Part 2 being the year end jury outlined above under jury requirements. This Part 1 Technical Exam or “mid-term” exam will afford the department a clearer picture of technical development in year 1 and a more precise continuation recommendation for year 2. This two-stage jury will also help reinforce the two-year Lamb seminar course A Comprehensive Examination of Classical Percussion Training. Part 2 will be the normal year end jury consisting of solo works and orchestral repertoire.

The materials for the Percussion Technical Examination will be:

YEAR 1: Level I course outlined methods for snare drum and xylophone.

YEAR 2: Level I methods plus YEAR 2 supplemental materials for snare drum and xylophone.

The timpani portion for YEAR 1 will include technical exercises and etudes from “The Artist Timpanist.” The timpani portion for YEAR 2 will include tuning studies from “The Artist Timpanist.”

1. Freshman Year

I. SNARE DRUM

- a. Rolls at various dynamics and varying degrees of open or closed
- b. Rudiments
- c. Excerpt examples from *Year 1

II. KEYBOARD

- a. Scales (major and minor)
- b. Arpeggios, 2 octaves (major and minor)
- c. Excerpt examples from *Year 1
- d. Solo selections for both 2 mallets and 4 mallets

III. TIMPANI

- a. Excerpts from *Year 1
- b. Solo selection

2. Sophomore Year

I. SNARE DRUM

- a. Excerpts from *Year 2
- b. Solo selection

II. KEYBOARD

- a. Excerpts from *Year 2
- b. Solo selection or selections for both 2 mallets and 4 mallets

III. TIMPANI

- a. Excerpts from *Year 2
- b. Solo selections

IV. DRUM SET: Basic Skills

V. ACCESSORIES

- a. Cymbal, triangle, tambourine, bass drum skills (choose two instruments)
- b. Excerpts from *Year 2

**See Appendix I*

3. Junior Year

I. SNARE DRUM

- a. Excerpts from *Year 3
- b. Solo or etude selection (optional)

II. KEYBOARD

- a. Excerpts from *Year 3
- b. Solo Selections for both 2 mallets and 4 mallets

III. TIMPANI

- a. Excerpts from *Year 3
- b. Solo selection (to show tuning and/or pedaling abilities)

IV. ACCESSORIES

- a. Cymbal, triangle, tambourine, bass drum skills (choose two instruments different from sophomore year)
- b. Castanet skills
- c. Excerpts on accessories from *Year 1-4

V. MULTI-PERCUSSION WORK-published or self-composed (junior and senior year)

4. Senior Year

I. SNARE DRUM

- a. Review of excerpts from *Year 1-4
- b. Sight reading

II. KEYBOARD

- a. Excerpts from *Year 4
- b. Solo Selections for both 2 mallets and 4 mallets

III. TIMPANI

- a. Excerpts from *Year 4

IV. MULTI-PERCUSSION WORK-published or self-composed (junior and senior year)

**See Appendix I*

5. Classical Master's Degree, Year 1

- a. Show extensive knowledge of orchestral repertoire from *Year 1-4
- b. Prepare "mini-recital"- to include multi-percussion, timpani, and keyboards

**See Appendix I*

6. OP Master's Degree, Year 1

(Repertoire suggestion only; to be discussed and determined with OP faculty members)

Prepare: A solo work to be chosen in consultation with faculty

Excerpts:

Snare Drum:

Bartok	Concerto for Orchestra
Prokofiev	Lt. Kije
Ravel	Bolero
Rimsky-Korsakov	Scheherazade
Schuman	Symphony #3

Cymbals:

Dvorak	New World Symphony (#9)
Rachmaninoff	Piano Concerto #2
Tchaikovsky	Romeo and Juliet
Tchaikovsky	Symphony #4 and #6

Tambourine:

Berlioz	Roman Carnival Overture
Bizet	Carmen Suites
Dvorak	Carnival Overture
Tchaikovsky	Nutcracker Suite

Triangle:

Bizet	Carmen Suite
Brahms	Symphony #4
Dvorak	New World Symphony (#9)
Liszt	Piano Concerto #1

Xylophone:

Copland	Appalachian Spring
Copland	Hoedown
Gershwin	Porgy and Bess
Kabalevsky	Colas Breugnon
Shostakovich	Polka from the Golden Age

Bells:

Dukas	Sorcerer's Apprentice
Mozart	Magic Flute
Respighi	Pines of Rome
Strauss	Don Juan
Tchaikovsky	Sleeping Beauty
Wagner	Dance of the Apprentices

Timpani:

Beethoven	Symphonies
Brahms	Symphonies
Hindemith	Symphonic Metamorphosis
Mozart	Symphony #39
Stravinsky	Rite of Spring
Tchaikovsky	Symphony #4

7. Classical Master's Degree, Year 2

- a. Orchestra and operatic excerpts at a professional level
- b. Be prepared to play selections from recital programs

8. OP Master's Degree, Year 2

(Repertoire suggestion only; to be discussed and determined with OP faculty members)

Prepare: A solo work to be chosen in consultation with faculty

Excerpts:

Snare Drum:

Kodaly	Hary Janos
Nielsen	Clarinet Concerto
Nielsen	Symphony #5
Shostakovich	Symphony #10 and #11

Cymbals:

Debussy	La Mer
Mussorgsky	Night on Bald Mountain
Sibelius	Finlandia

Tambourine:

Debussy	Iberia
Grieg	Arabian Dance from Peer Gynt
Stravinsky	Petroushka

Castanets:

Debussy	Iberia
Prokofiev	Piano Concerto #3
Wagner	Tannhauser

Bells:

Debussy	La Mer
Glazunov	Violin Concerto
Messiaen	Exotic Birds
Prokofiev	Piano Concerto #1
Rimsky-Korsakov	Russian Easter Overture
Wagner	Waldweben

Xylophone:

Barber	Medea's Meditation
Bartok	Music for Strings, Percussion and Celesta
Bernstein	West Side Story
Gershwin	American in Paris
Kodaly	Hary Janos
Messiaen	Exotic Birds
Schuman	Symphony #3

Vibraphone:

Bernstein	West Side Story
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Bass Drum:

Mahler	Symphony #3
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Stravinsky	Rite of Spring
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Bass Drum with cymbal attachment:

Mahler	Symphony #1
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Stravinsky	Petroushka
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Timpani:

Bartok	Concerto for Orchestra
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Beethoven	Overtures and Concertos
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Berlioz	Symphony Fantastique
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Dvorak	Symphonies
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Strauss	Burleske
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Strauss	Death and Transfiguration
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Strauss	Don Juan
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Strauss	Till Eulenspiegel
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Stravinsky	Firebird, Petroushka
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Wagner	Gotterdammerung
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APPENDIX I

The percussion department at Manhattan School of Music is determined to provide its student with foundational skills and opportunities to prepare them for any area of professional music-making. Any interest a student might have in ethnic, contemporary, jazz, solo, ensemble, or orchestral percussion will be encouraged by the entire percussion faculty.

The following lists contain suggested orchestral timpani and percussion excerpts for both undergraduate and graduate students. (Some non- orchestral works are listed as well) These lists are included in this handbook to give students some guidelines for studying one small area of percussion performance. The excerpts need not be studied in the given order-that can be discussed between the student and teacher. But it is suggested that all students be familiar with all excerpts by the time they graduate.

Timpani:

YEAR 1

Various	Overtures
Beethoven	Symphonies 1 and 2
Mozart	Symphonies

YEAR 2

Beethoven	Symphonies 3-9
Mendelssohn	Symphonies
Schumann	Symphonies

YEAR 3

Brahms	Symphonies
Dvorak	Symphonies
Strauss	Tone Poems
Tchaikovsky	Symphonies

YEAR 4

Bartok	Concerto for Orchestra
Hindemith	Symphonic Metamorphosis
Mahler	Symphonies
Sibelius	Symphonies
Stravinsky	Rite of Spring

Master's Degree (Timpani continued)

Review of 19th Century Repertoire

Operatic Repertoire

Barber
Bartok

Britten
Copland
Shostakovich
Stravinsky

Percussion: Year 1

SNARE DRUM

Bartok	Concerto for Orchestra
Britten	Young Person's Guide to the Orchestra
Prokofiev	Peter and the Wolf
Ravel	Bolero
Rossini	Overture to La Gazza Ladra

XYLOPHONE

Britten	Young Person's Guide to the Orchestra
Kabalevsky	Colas Breugnon
Khachaturian	Dance of the Rose Maidens
Ravel	Mother Goose
Saint-Saens	Danse Macabre
Shostakovich	Polka from the Golden Age

BELLS

Mozart	Magic Flute
Strauss	Don Juan
Tchaikovsky	Sleeping Beauty
Wagner	Dance of the Apprentices, Rhine Journey

CYMBALS

Tchaikovsky	Romeo and Juliet
Wagner	Ride of the Valkyries

TAMBOURINE

Berlioz	Roman Carnival Overture
Dvorak	Carnival Overture

TRIANGLE

Brahms	Symphony No. 4
Liszt	Piano Concerto No. 1

YEAR 2

SNARE DRUM

Rimsky-Korsakov	Scheherazade
Prokofiev	Lt. Kije
Schuman, Wm.	Symphony No. 3

XYLOPHONE

Copland	Billy the Kid, Appalachian Spring, Hoedown
Gershwin	Porgy and Bess
Strauss	Salome
Stravinsky	Petroushka

BELLS

Debussy	La Mer
Dukas	Sorcerer's Apprentice
Prokofiev	Alexander Nevsky
Respighi	Pines of Rome

CYMBALS

Mozart	Abduction from the Seraglio
Rachmaninoff	Piano concerto No. 2
Tchaikovsky	Symphonies 4 and 6

TAMBOURINE

Borodin	Polovetsian Dances
Chabrier	Espana
Rimsky-Korsakov	Scheherazade

TRIANGLE

Bizet	Carmen Suite
Dvorak	New World Symphony

BASS DRUM

Mahler	Symphony 1 and 3
Stravinsky	Rite of Spring

MULTI-PERCUSSION

Bernstein	West Side Story
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YEAR 3

SNARE DRUM

Kodaly	Hary Janos
Prokofiev	Symphony No. 5
Ravel	Rapsodie Espagnole
Shostakovich	Symphony No. 10

XYLOPHONE

Bartok	Music for Strings, Percussion and Celesta
Bernstein	West Side Story
Gershwin	American in Paris
Kodaly	Hary Janos

BELLS

Glazunov	Violin Concerto
Holst	The Planets
Kodaly	Hary Janos
Rimsky-Korsakov	Russian Easter Overture
Debussy	Fetes, La Mer
Mussorgsky	Night on Bald Mountain
Sibelius	Finlandia

TAMBOURINE

Debussy	Iberia
Grieg	Arabian Dance from Peer Gynt
Stravinsky	Petroushka

TRIANGLE

Rimsky-Korsakov	Scheherazade
Wagner	Prelude to Die Meistersinger

CASTANETS

Prokofiev	Piano Concerto No. 3
Wagner	Tannhauser

BASS DRUM AND CYM. ATTACHED

Mahler	Symphony No. 1
Stravinsky	Petroushka

MULIT-PERCUSSION

Stravinsky	L'Historie du soldat
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VIBES

Bernstein	West Side Story
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YEAR 4

SNARE DRUM

Sousa	Stars and Stripes Forever (style studies)
Strauss, J.	Die Fledermaus, Kaiser Waltz (style studies)
Nielsen	Clarinet Concerto, Symphony No. 5

XYLOPHONE

Barber	Medea's Meditation
Messiaen	Exotic Birds
Schuman, Wm.	Symphony No. 3
Stravinsky	Firebird (complete), Les Noces BELLS
Messiaen	Exotic Birds
Prokofiev	Piano Concerto No. 1
Stravinsky	Petroushka
Wagner	Waldweben

CHIMES

Messiaen	Et Expecto Resurrection Mortuorum
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CYMBALS, TAMBOURINE, TRIANGLE

- Refine skills and styles learned in first three years
- Develop personal style

BASS DRUM

Works by Bartok, Mahler, Prokofiev, etc. (sounds and styles)

MULTI-PERCUSSION

Bartok	Sonata for Two Pianos and Percussion
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APPENDIX II

DOCTORAL STUDIES

Three Recitals

Extensive skills displayed on all keyboard instruments

Vast knowledge of multi-percussion repertoire

Timpani

Comprehensive knowledge of 20th Century Orchestral Repertoire

Operatic Repertoire

Solo Repertoire

Percussion

Comprehensive knowledge of 20th Century Orchestral Repertoire

Solo Repertoire