

# Matthew Weyer Spinning Yarns

Six Solo Tales for Developing Four-Mallet Technique



Spinning Yarns by Matthew Weyer
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This collection contains a series of six etudes designed to accompany the beginning/intermediate marimbist on his/her journey into four-mallet technique. Each solo includes a set of "foundations" — exercises and suggestions to help the performer develop technique, musicianship, and a solid approach to learning and performing as a musician.

Take your time to read, consider, and try the ideas on each of these pages. Don't be in a hurry to learn the piece as quickly as possible. As many wise teachers have said, "If you don't have time to learn it correctly, when will you have time to re-learn it correctly?"

### Breathe (foundation)

**Breathe** is a simple, happy reflection upon the pure and vulnerable nature of a newborn child. The performer should strive to achieve the most appropriate balance between the two hands for each musical situation. Medium to medium-hard mallets should cre<sup>-t</sup>e the best articulation and tone. Beware of the changing clef in the lower staff, and keep it fun!

### TECHNIQUE AND ESSENTIALS

First, get comfortable with the **E major scale** sy be easiest to visualize the shape of the scale on the keyboard:



If you will be using the Stevens grip to play this solo, suggest practicing the stroke on a table or floor be' method books with helpful information about thi these skills. Position your hand with the **thum'** hands with someone. It is important to **mov** much as possible.

After becoming comfortable with below to develop the rhythmic coorhythmic permunant or try the exernythm in the last a sures is ea imaginary sixteenth-note grid ofter



### MUSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Play the excerpt below from measures 18 to 22 of the solo, using each step provided to practice dynamic balance between the right and left hand.



**Step 1:** Ignore the written dynamics and play both hands at a comfortable volume, perhaps mezzo forte, and strive to achieve the same dynamic sound and feel with each hand.

Sten 2: Play the left and melody louder than the right hand. Can you still hear both parts?

3: Plat the left-hand melody softer than the right hand. Are you hearing consistent the entire excerpt?

dynamics. Notice the musical interplay between the two parts and work to

#### GROWING T

in advance when you we so determine what time or do practice. Setting goals will keep can already play!

ce time. Keep a notebook or practice chart and plan sts do no have regular access to a marimba, strument. Plan in advance **what** you will you from only practicing the sections you

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rmers must also **practice performing**.

Perate some of the pressure of an actual se or four people, increase the size of a recital and perform it only once. What of an audience. Think creatively about d all be excellent options. Create more

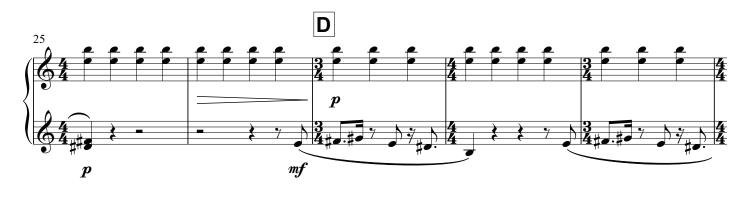
### **Breathe**

Matthew Weyer

















### Press (foundation)

**Press** should create a mysterious mood, so use restraint and don't overplay the dynamics. The dead stroke is featured throughout this solo; one approach to this technique is to play with a very light touch, like dampening the timpani. Be sure to bring out the notes of the melody indicated with a tenuto marking, without playing these notes loudly as true accents.

#### TECHNIQUE AND ESSENTIALS

Before starting to learn *Press*, you shall become comfortable with the **C minor scale**. Many musicians are more comfortable with major scales than minor scales, so use the relative major scale (E flat) to get used to the key signature.

Practice both scales, and notice that they use the same notes but start on different pitches









If you use the Stevens grip, be sure you are technique is used to play with one mallet is sideways, like turning a doorknob tacet mallet as still as possible. It is efficiency in the string motion. Try your feet so that you stays bel

As suggested by the title, one re stroke," appearing for the first t commonly indicated with a "+"

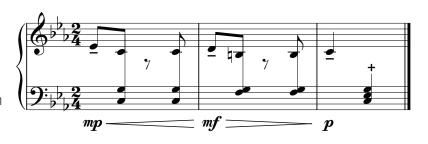
A dead stroke can be player usually marked *piano*. Try u timpani to silence the drum "crown," when using the deabe sure to make the effect colo is the "dead ad stroke is w the notes:

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, but in this solo it's limagine dampening the bars, as you would muffle riking the bars near the top of the mallet, or the s used to create a unique musical sound, or "timbre," so ence!

#### MUSICAL DEVELOPMENT

In the excerpt shown here, notice the line appearing below the notes in the treble clef staff. This is a "tenuto" symbol, which indicates that this note should be played with more weight than the others. In the case of these three measures, the tenuto notes are the melody.



Try playing the first example at one dynamic level. Then, add the crescendo. After you are able to play the written dynamics, play the melody louder than the chords to achieve the tenuto articulation.

Try the same sequence with the next phrase:



vill produce your best **sound quality** on the marimba by playing near the center of the bar and it is loosely. Be sure to support the mallets from the correct points in your grip, but vou will start to lose your quality of sound. Be aware of your stroke velocity and

**TESS** 

Great musik must break up ye, micro-goals. Think of, times before you swal wa, warmup, would be to learn the playing the dynamics? Have ye, you're playing in the correct octoactice time. If your goal is to learn a solo like *Press*, you actives, and then break up your daily practice time into take one slice of pizza, take one bite, and chew a few ay. Or possible goal for the first day, after a good ar all the details from the beginning. Are you ture and accidentals carefully? Are you sure

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ses, you may need to move on and return to ece of music and use this **imagery** 

n into multiple periods, like classes in a school

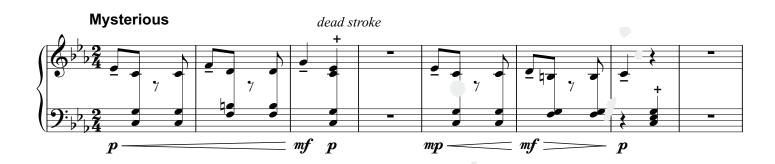
and harmonies, and it can be very rewarding to hear to

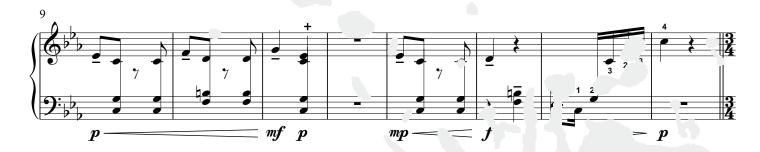
ssociate certain feelings with chords motional value of a piece of music.

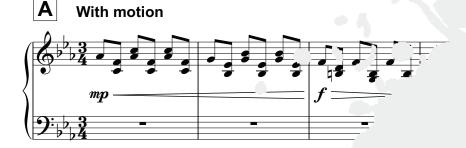
1se to communicate a certain idea to a necessity in the strument to express this idea, without

### **Press**

Matthew Weyer



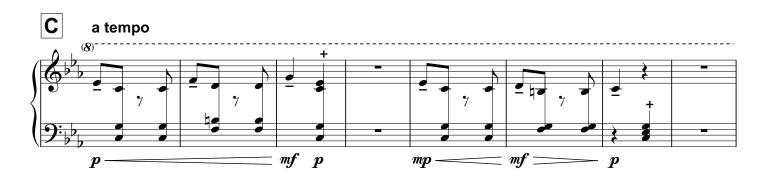


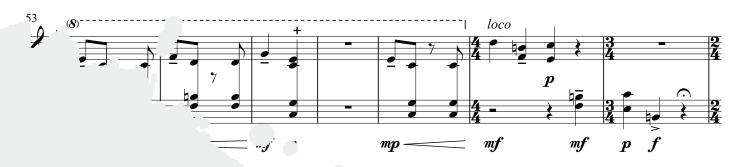


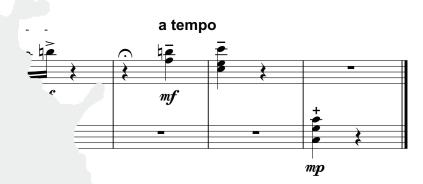












### Leap (foundation)

**Leap** is a chorale inspired by a premature loss of life, and was composed on February 29, 20'6. The musical construction of the solo features more space, simpler chords, and more stepwise motion than many traditional four-part chorales. The roll in measures 23 and 24 :n be played as a one-handed roll or as a mandolin roll, which may be the most practical option. Experiment with a variety of roll s eeds, take plenty of time in the rests, and use soft mallets to avoid excessive contact sound in the low register of the marimba.

#### TECHNIQUE AND ESSENTIALS

Even though there is no 'rey signature in this search, it is written in the key of **A major.** Learn and play the A major scale and arpeggio. Notice the scale degreer shown underneath each note.



When you play the notes in the arpeggio at the same a **major chord**. In *Leap*, the three chords used most D major, and E major. Study these chords and ideappear in the solo. They are shown here in root also appear in a different inversion.

The first chord of the piece is—you rolling the chords, strike the notes vibraphone.

As a second step, play sixteenth no practice the approximate hand sr



Finally, play a traditional roll on each note by simply playing single strokes. Many players and teachers prefer to start rolling a chord with the left hand so that the lower notes speak first. Another option is to strike all of the notes at once and then roll. Experiment, listen, and decide which sound you prefer for each situation.

When rolling a four-note chord, you will be using the **double vertical** stroke, so be sure to move from the wrist, keeping the thumb on top with the Stevens grip. If one hand plays only one note, you will be using the **single independent stroke** in that hand. As mentioned earlier, this stroke is played using a twisting motion. Even though it looks simple on paper, a chorale is physically demanding to perform, often requiring dozens of strokes per measure. Be efficient with your motion, stay relaxed, and build endurance to sound your best throughout the piece!

#### MUSICAL DEVELOPMENT

In most cases marimba players will use a **traditional roll** to sustain the chords in a chorale. This type of roll is played with single strokes between the hands, like a single stroke roll at the snare drum. Many times you will be using a double vertical stroke with each hand. The **double lateral roll** uses fast double lateral strokes to create a different texture, isolating each note of the chord (see Foundation for *Torn* on pg. 26).

Played with single strokes between the hands, like a single stroke roll uses fast double lateral strokes to create a different texture, isolating each note of the chord (see Foundation for *Torn* on pg. 26).

Played with single strokes between the hands, like a single stroke roll uses fast double lateral roll uses fast double lateral roll you make her in this option you allow the notes to ripple. Using the double lateral roll, you make her of these roll options can be used occasionally at the climax or end of a phrase for

outer mallet (4) below the edge. Move your hand up and down as fast as and box... of the bar with alternating strokes.

have to be played whom the softest or loudest m from measures 3 and 4, soread goart: You can choose to use a slower roll speed to enhance phasize the most interesting chord. In this example a because are closer together and faster as they



It is also important to bring out (play louder) certain notes in the chord. Always bring out the melody and any passing tones or suspensions (interesting notes that clash within the chord) by playing one mallet with more weight or velocity. In measure 5 shown here, play all of the treble clef (right hand) notes louder than the left hand, as this is the melody. Play the G# even louder than the A and the F#, since this note is a sing tone.



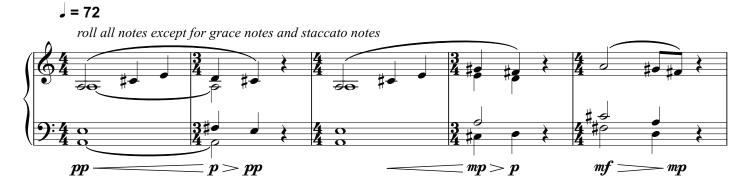
### GROWING THROUGH THE PROCESS

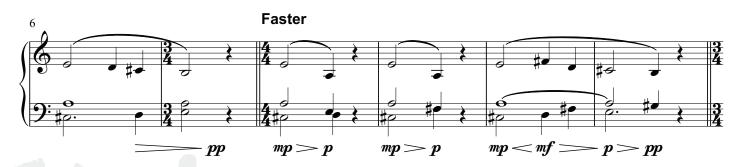
In order to get the most benefit from your practine, it is very important that you find a **private, quiet place to practice**. Whether you are practicing at home or at smooth, this can be very difficult. Try to choose the right time and place to avoid interruptions from other people. Turn off your cell phone or have some a monitor your phone for real emergencies. Be aware of distractions that disrupt your progress and expert of a minimum.

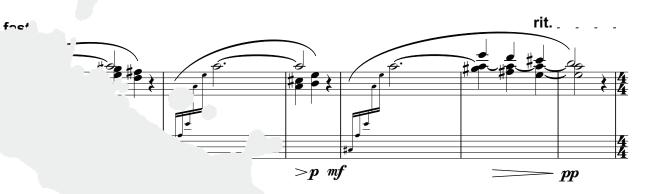
Take your time as you perform this piece. Allow some extractime for the lads of line es and rests between the phrases. Many performers are uncomfortable with **silence**. Remember that the lads of line es and rests between the phrases. Many performers are uncomfortable with **silence**. Remember that the lads of line es and rests between the phrases. Many performers are uncomfortable with **silence**. Remember that the lads of line es and rests between the phrases. Many performers are uncomfortable with **silence**. Remember that the lads of line es and rests between the phrases. Many performers are uncomfortable with **silence**. Remember that the lads of line es and rests between the phrases. Many performers are uncomfortable with **silence**. Remember that the lads of line es and rests between the phrases.

### Leap

Matthew Weyer









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### **Drive** (foundation)

**Drive** is all about creating a sense of energy and forward motion. A mallet capable of multiple articulations would be best for this piece. Don't let the right hand ostinato become too heavy or shrill during letter A and B, and place a slight emphasis on beat one as indicated by the tenuto markings. In order to create a legato phrase at letter C, try using a slight decrescendo with each slur to allow the notes to "blur" into each other.

#### TECHNIQUE AND ESSENTIALS

As with any new solo, start by playing the scale in scale to quickly identify the key. This solo has one flat in the key signature, and this indicates the key of F major. Another hint: Check the first and last note, as this is often the "tonic" note, and this indicates the degree. Usually, this will indicate the key.

Practice the **F major scale** and also use scale patterns, such as a "scale in vird" to become more familiar with the key:







After mastering the grip and strokes, the next shifting. This term refers to your method of a marimba player starts with the mallets of possible to a position of the next notion to make the mallets: the vertical motion to make two motions should blend toged check mark.

Isolate the left hu. sat letter



Sometimes, your who 'e body spot. As you shift from the sribs as you shift the mallets body as you play so that yo

## Sample Image

7 ...

Allow you to comfortably strike the bars in the correct third measure, allow your elbow to move in toward your nique is known as **elbow shifting**. Move your feet and fice and stay in position to reach all of the bars.

#### Musical Development

As you play this solo, you may start to feel the meter as 6/8 instead of 3/4. If this happens, it's okay. Bring out the accents and tenuto markings to emphasize beat one of each measure, but don't fight the instinct to feel two triple-based beats instead of three duple beats. Music is very subjective, and your audience may even feel the pulse differently than you as the performer.

Another important concept is how to create the six-note phrases at letter C. Due to the acoustic nature of the marimba, each note has a quick decay after being struck. One practical way to create the effect of playing in a "legato" style is to decrescendo from the first note of the phrase to the last note, allowing the notes inside the "slur" marking to blur together smoothly. Play the second note at the volume that the first note is sounding at that time, not at the volume that you struck the first note, and the two notes will sound like a slur on a string or wind instrument. Play all six notes of the phrase this way, and you will create a very smooth, legato phrase. Try this with the first two measures at letter C.



ext question is pretty obvious: What if I need to crescendo while playing legato? You certainly and softer at the same time. Another option to create smooth phrasing is to simply e mallets or playing too hard. Use a consistent touch, hold the mallets loosely, and so harshly. Try this with the next two measures. The sim. marking means to regato playing as before:



at first, and learn all the

energy and *Drive*! Practice with a metronome, slowly and three sphit.

GROWING THROUGH THE PROD

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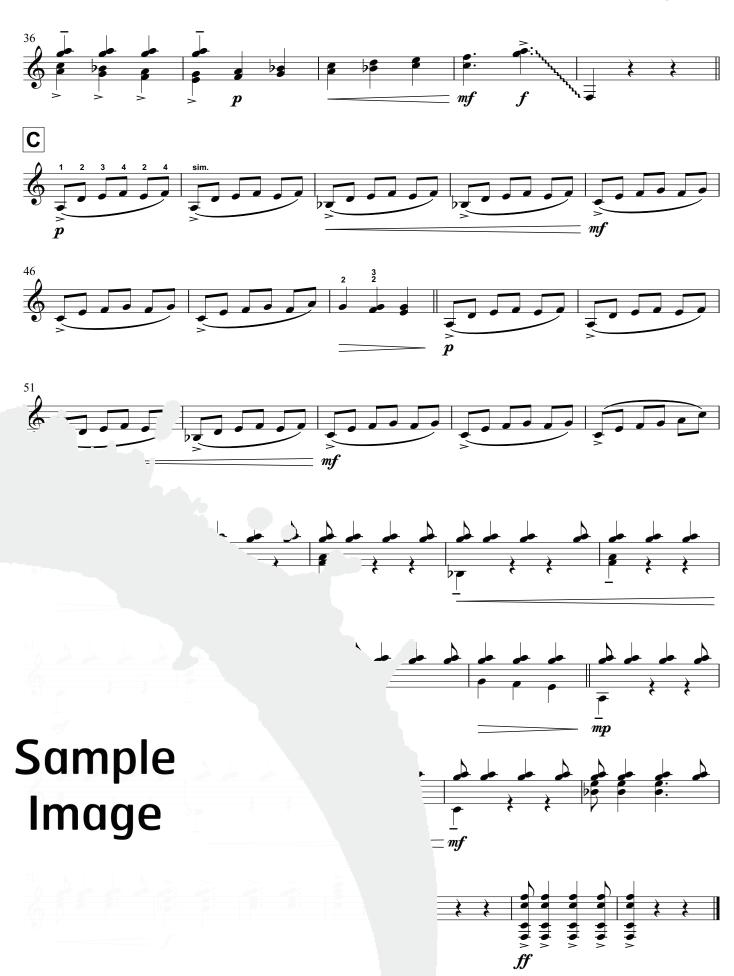
While you are practicing the physical act of playing through the solo. Additionally, you are practicing you you're also practicing how you feel about playing each permanent part of your future performance. Each of the so practice the thoughts and emotions that you want to

ent worlds. Find ways in your practice one or high quality audio recorder to estly to how you sound. You'll learn quite task of performing at the same time. nowing that you will soon be listening to

you are also practicing thinking **essaging** as you respond to mistakes. solo and making these feelings a ats becomes a habit as you practice, you on stage.







### Swell (foundation)

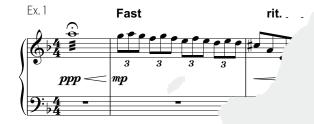
**Swell** depicts the excitement and intrigue of traveling to a new place, possibly overseas, where the culture and language are not your own. This solo is named for the dramatic nature of the two-measure phrase introduced at letter A. Use care to create expression with this repetitive pattern without covering up the chromatic bass line or the eighth notes marker as tenuto. A graduated set of mallets or perhaps medium soft rubber mallets would be a tasteful choice for performing this picce.

#### TECHNIQUE AND ESSENTIALS

Swell is in the key of D minor, which has the same key signature as a major. As you might notice, C# appears quite often, which indicates that the another scale degree is raised a half step. This is known as the **harmonic** form of the D minor scale. Practice in harmonic minor, and consider C# a remember of this scale even though it will not appear in the key signature:



This solo covers a fairly wide range of the marimbous oit will be in method of moving your feet. After learning a section of the solo and feet as you would while playing. Will you have to reach are playing? Are you crossing your feet as you move of and without the mallets using these two excerpts:



One more consic of vision is essentic

in performir "target p



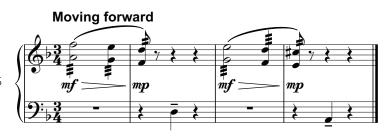
This section contains a cou and low register of the mari difficult to maintain a wide ' without looking? Are you locomfortable and consisten

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I also some simultaneous responsibility between the high see the full keyboard? If you are leaning forward, it will be bu established the muscle memory to find some of the notes between the high and low register? Most importantly, are you tant thoughts as you prepare to perform this section.

#### Musical Development

The solo is named for the shape of the twomeasure phrases beginning at letter A. Even more challenging may be creating clear phrases at letter B. Since the first two phrases are short, try playing them using a subtle decrescendo:



The next four measures contain a longer phrase. Try using a crescendo and decrescendo to achieve this line:



Many percussionists first encounter grace notes when playing a flam on the snare drum. A marimbist should approach grace notes like a wind player or vocalist. Refer to measures 16 to 19 in the solo and interpret the grace rates as sixteenth notes.

2 to this piece is notes more than in from Ir in A in notes:



GROWING THROU

an already play well in order to avoid tackling ding your practice goals for day, week, month, d struggles. Reflect on your progress and

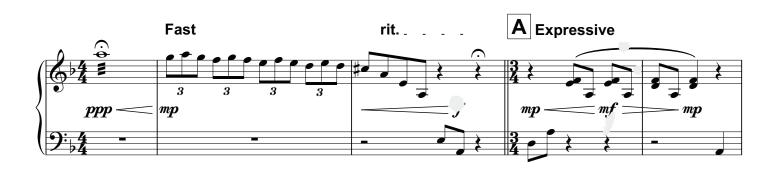
all ages and skill levels. It's perfectly

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the symptoms but not eliminate the feeling rantee becoming more comfortable and emotional effects of anxiety. Instead, u perform to relax and focus. Practice oughts you would have during this walk. In your exercise and diet. Finally, think of the right.

Matthew Weyer























### Torn (foundation)

**Torn** is a musical expression of the mixed emotions resulting from a deeply personal loss. Once again, a graduated set of yarn mallets would be an excellent choice for this solo. Feel free to be as expressive as possible with tempo and dynamics. There are many rolls in this pece, so keep it fresh with a variety of roll speeds and types. Experiment with moving toward the crown of the mallet as you decress endo the rolls.

### TECHNIQUE AND ESSENTIALS

Immerse yourself in the key of **D** major. Don't must yourself to playing scales in single octave. Practice the scale over the full range of the instrument and try using two octaves at once, as shown have:



On a couple of occasions in this solo, you may need to use the combines the vertical wrist motion of the double vertical at single independent stroke to quickly play two separate played slowly with the single independent technique faster:



Playing the follow arpt from me the double lateral st. The left sticking and twist your left hand usin and Db.

#### MUSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Chords and harmonies create certain feelings and moods. A chord with clash and tension is said to be **dissonant**. A chord that is harmonically stable is said to be **consonant**. Play and listen to these four chords from the solo:



The first and fourth chords create the same general mood, but the first chord has more tension due to the Ab added to the Gb major chord. This non-chord tone creates a gentle dissonance called a "suspension." The second chord is pleasant but doesn't complete the musical idea. Without a doubt, the third chord has the most dissonance, which immediately resolves at the fourth chord.

Why is all this important? Recognizing the presence of musical tension and release allows you to make artistic chapes with your dynamics, roll speed, and tone quality. Each of these nuances helps to hate a mature performance that will communicate the musical idea to your audience.

### HE PR ESS

makes permanent. Consistent, correct repetition makes can to count? **Create a game** that makes it fun to practice. mba and move one over to a new stack for each correct cen moved to the other stack. Don't speed up your some pressure as you near your goal and motivates you carefully perform thoughtfully, and don't drift into

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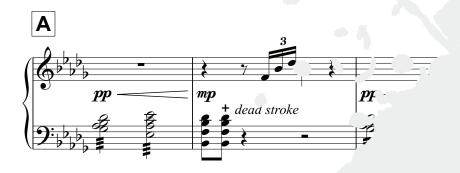
ke the piece yours through your musical hrasing, and other musical elements. Take ach some imagery and meaning to each

, there was an inspiration behind the governown voice through your personal

Smoothly J = 76







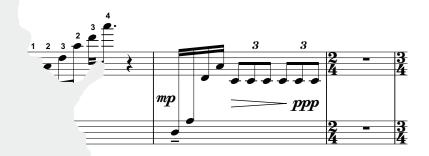


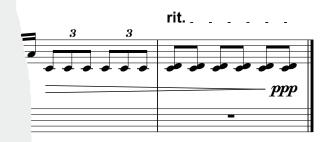


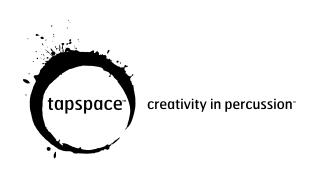












**Spinning Yarns** is an heartfelt collection of four-mallet solos for the developing marimbist. Created for beginning to intermediate players by pecussion educator, Matthew Weyer, these short, lyrical pieces are great for private study or recital performance and showcase the growing popularity of the marimba as a versatile instrument of virtuosic expression.

### Contained in this collection:

- 1. **Breathe** (Med-Easy, 1:40)
- 2. **Press** (Med-Easy, 1:30)
- 3. **Leap** (Med-Easy, 2:00)
- 4. **Drive** (Medium, 1:15)
- 5. **Swell** (Medium, 1:30)
- 6. **Torn** (Medium, 2:30)

