

Milestones in the recent history of the marimba:

- 1901 The marimba is scheduled for its North American debut in Buffalo at the Pan-American Exposition. Cancelled due to the assassination of President McKinley in that city.
- 1903 John Calhoun Deagan in Chicago begins to make xylophones and orchestra bells with chromatic keyboards and resonators.
- 1908 The Hurtado Brothers tour North America with their chromatic marimba with wooden box-resonators.
- 1910 The J. C. Deagan Company begins manufacturing chromatic marimbas.
- 1933 Clair Omar Musser conducts 100 marimbas at the Century of Progress Exhibition in Chicago. They perform arrangements of Wagner's *Pilgrims' Chorus*, Chopin, Elgar and Dvorak's *New World Symphony*.
- 1935 The 100-member International Marimba Symphony Orchestra performs to startled reviews in Europe and at Carnegie Hall in New York City. Paul Creston's *Concertino* composed and premiered.
- 1937 Leopold Stokowski toys with idea of adding bass marimba to the string bass section of the orchestra because of its full bass tone. After borrowing one from Clair Omar Musser, wisely decides against it.
- 1940s Brass resonators on marimbas are replaced by cardboard tubes due to rationing of metals for war effort. Marimba range begins to shrink from five octaves to three-and-a-half octaves in response to desire for portability.
- 1940s Clair Omar Musser breaks away from J. C. Deagan Company over issue of rehiring WWII veterans and founds Musser Marimba Company.
- 1950s Vida Chenoweth performs first solo marimba recital of all original marimba compositions. Commissions and performs Robert Kurka's *Concerto for Marimba and Orchestra* at Carnegie Hall in 1959. First original polyphonic work for marimba composed by Alfred Fissinger, *Suite for Marimba*.
- 1960s Popularity of marimba increases as college music departments develop "total percussion" programs, marimba ensembles and percussion ensembles. Important Japanese composers write works for Keiko Abe in late 1960s.
- 1970s and 80s
Introduction of one-handed rolls, birch handles, single independent strokes and other new techniques by Leigh Howard Stevens spurs a burst of player and composer interest in marimba as solo instrument in USA and Europe.
- 1980s and 90s
Marimba range begins to expand again to size that was common in 1920s (4-1/2 to 5 octaves). Major composers begin to write for marimba: Druckman, Miki, Reich, Schwantner, Berio, Henze. Malletch begins manufacturing extended range marimbas with brass resonators, like the original marimbas and xylophones of the early 1900s made by the J. C. Deagan Company.

1998 Revival of the “marimba orchestra” culminates in a performance at West Point, New York on March 28, 1998 with 134 marimbas on stage being simultaneously played upon by 184 marimbists, conducted by Dr. Frederick Fennell.

2000 to present

The marimba is now a fundamental part of the percussion curriculum in every degree granting collegiate music program around the world. Marimba repertoire has grown from a handful of works in the 1960s, to thousands. The instrument appears to be omni-present in film and TV music scores and is commonly found on stage in the back of symphony orchestra whenever new works for orchestra are performed. Winter Guard International (“WGI”) now boasts of having thousands of percussion ensembles performing in high schools all over American, each with up to 4 marimbas in the front percussion section. No longer a “novelty” instrument, it is firmly established in the musical cultures of America, Europe and Asia.