

Applying Karnatic Rhythmical Techniques to Western Music

By Rafael Reina

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Most classical musicians, whether in orchestral or ensemble situations, will have to face a piece by composers such as Ligeti, Messiaen, Varèse or Xenakis, while improvisers face music influenced by Dave Holland, Steve Coleman, Aka Moon, Weather Report, Irakere or elements from the Balkans, India, Africa or Cuba. Rafael Reina argues that today's music demands a new approach to rhythmical training, a training that will provide musicians with the necessary tools to face, with accuracy, more varied and complex rhythmical concepts, while keeping the emotional content. Reina uses the architecture of the South Indian Karnatic rhythmical system to enhance and radically change the teaching of rhythmical solfege at a higher education level and demonstrates how this learning can influence the creation and interpretation of complex contemporary classical and jazz music. The book is designed for classical and jazz performers as well as creators, be they composers or improvisers, and is a clear and complete guide that will enable future solfege teachers and students to use these techniques and their methodology to greatly improve their rhythmical skills. An accompanying website of audio examples helps to explain each technique.

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Editorial Review

Review
'This important study provides a comprehensive view of one of the richest rhythmic traditions in the world. Built on sustained experiential learning, Karnatic rhythm provides an almost scientific investigation of rhythmic possibility, something which, through dedication and long study, Rafael Reina is especially able to convey and invoke. His is a study from a Western musician, and the double benefit of this book is that he is then able to demonstrate the efficacy and inspiration that a Karnatic approach to rhythm and rhythmic structure can bring to Western music, showing both how it can enhance performance and learning techniques, and also be a source for the composer of intriguing and reframing compositional devices.' Peter Wiegold, Brunel University, UK

About the Author
Rafael Reina was born in the former Spanish colony of Equatorial Guinea and until the age of 13, was exposed only to African music, flamenco, Stravinsky and Béla-BartÃ³k. He went on to study jazz, West African, flamenco and Berber music, and graduated ’Summa cum Laude’ in composition from Berklee College of Music (USA). Reina’s extensive oeuvre includes three contemporary operas and ensemble pieces performed world-wide. He also co-founded two ensembles with non-western influences. After moving to Amsterdam, Reina studied Karnatic music in South India, which led to the creation of the programme ’Contemporary Music Through Non-Western Techniques’ at the Amsterdam Conservatoire, a PhD thesis at Brunel University (UK) and ultimately this book.

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