

March 12, 2012
Rochester, NH

For Brett Gallo

Note: This piece is untitled

Duration: c. 20 minutes

INSTRUMENTATION

Drums:

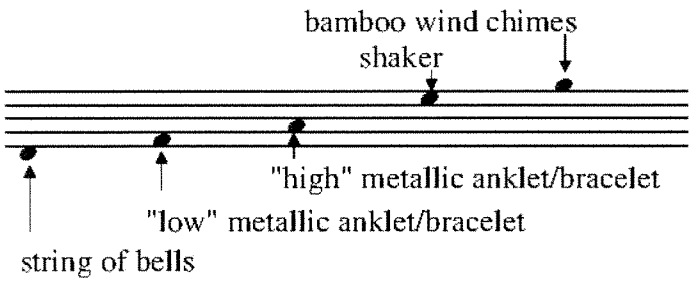
- 5 Timpani (labeled I-V [low-to-high])

Accessories/Preparations:

- Bamboo Wind Chimes
- Small Shaker (caxixi, egg shaker, etc.)
- 3 metallic bracelets/anklets with small bells/metal discs (roughly graduated from low to high, though all will be essentially “high” in sound)
- String of small (1-2 cm.) metal bells
- Large Metal Mixing Bowl (with distinct but not necessarily pure pitch)
- 2 Prayer Bowls (different pitches)

Key:

Upper Staff:



Lower Staff:



Mallets: 2 Soft, 2 Medium, 2 Rubber

Initial Preparation: The “middle” metallic bracelet/anklet should be placed on Drum II (roughly halfway between edge and center).

Later Preparations: While the “high” metallic bracelet/anklet is played like a shaker, at a specific point in the score the “low” one, along with the string of bells, is placed on Drum III (in addition to being shaken). The prayer bowls and mixing bowl are placed at the centers of Drums I, II, and III.

NOTATION

Spatial notation is used throughout, where each staff system indicates 60 seconds – events located on the staff should be executed in time relative to their placement in space (i.e., events to the left occur before events to the right).

Horizontal lines continuing (from left to right) from events located on the staff indicate the duration of such activities (for example, a roll on a drum is indicated with the appropriate notehead and tremolo indication, followed by a line: the initial notehead indicates the point in time at which the roll should begin, the end of the line indicates the point in time at which the roll should stop).

Drum notation:



- A. Filled notehead: play regularly, on the drum head (roughly halfway between the edge and center, unless otherwise specified)
- B. Open notehead plus tremolo: Roll (may be one- or two-handed, as specified)
- C. Diamond notehead: Strike the object (bowl) on the drum (with the mallet specified, but in the manner the percussionist judges best for producing the highest quality sound)

Finger Trill: A “plus sign” (+) is placed above an open notehead to indicate the specific idea of tapping with the fingertips (alternately, between the first and second fingers, as in a trill on a keyboard instrument). This is either to be performed in the normal striking location (if no other indication is given), or “outside the edge”: not simply at the edge, but actually on the “other side” of the curved bar at the edge of the drumhead; yet the tapping should still be “on the skin”.

Other instruments (upper staff):

The remaining instruments are often used to create a “general din” to bridge the drum sounds as well as to provide “cover” for practical actions such as mallet changes, preparing drums, etc. Unless otherwise specified in the score, the indication given is akin to a “roll” (i.e., an open notehead with a tremolo indication, and a horizontal line). The sound, however, need not be absolutely consistent – even in the case of the shaker and bracelets/anklets, the player should activate the instruments subtly and carefully, in a manner similar to activating the wind chimes (i.e., not aggressively, simply “encouraging” the sound from the instruments). In all these cases the action itself will be somewhat more sustained than that associated with the wind chimes, but the overall sound and effect should be similar.


Brackets: Instructions placed in brackets throughout the score – generally referring to mallet changes, etc. – should be executed as smoothly and subtly as possible.

Parentheses: “RH,” and “LH” are placed in parentheses throughout the score, above or below specific events, to indicate which hand is to execute such activities. If no indication is given either both hands participate (e.g., two-handed roll) or whichever the player deems most convenient.

PREFABRICATED RHYTHMS

The following rhythms should be memorized by the performer.

Rhythm A: ♩ c. 60




Rhythm B: ♩ c. 132 (no slower)


Part 1



Part 2



Rhythm C: ♩ c. 132 (no slower)



At various points throughout the score a boxed capital letter A, B, or C is connected to one or more square noteheads on the staff, indicating which instrument/s is/are to be used in conjunction with the rhythm. In all cases, specific instructions are given which should clarify any possible confusion. Of special interest is the use of accents in Rhythm B, because at times the player is instructed to play accented notes in one manner and unaccented notes in another (for example, accented notes on one drum and accented notes on another). Also, Rhythm B is divided into two Parts, these are occasionally divided between instruments (i.e., the rhythm is performed completely, from beginning to end, but the player switches instruments halfway through) – if no mention of Parts 1 and 2 is given the player should simply execute the entire rhythm in the manner described in the score. The other two rhythms are always performed in an uncomplicated manner. Rhythm C is only to be played on the bowls (i.e., bodies) of the drums (with rubber mallets). To avoid confusion with the mixing and prayer bowls, the term “body” is used in the score. While Rhythms A and B are deployed with specific instructions as to which drums to use, Rhythm C is to be “spread out” over all five drum bodies, at the players discretion – this dispersal may be identical or different from one iteration of Rhythm C to the next, it is up to the performer.

SOUND QUALITY AND DYNAMICS

The performer should pursue a delicate, open, resonant sound quality characterized by clarity and continuity. This notion should inform not simply the execution of each individual sound, but the linking of one sound-type to the next, as well as the general manner of execution (i.e., fluid and elegant, rather than jagged and pronounced). No dynamic indications are given in the score. Specific dynamics are up to the performer, who should make decisions based on her/his sense of the sonic continuity in performance as well as considerations of sound quality. Within the basic guidelines outlined above: although not all sounds need be soft, no sound should be loud.

IMPROVISATION

At specific points in the score (involving passages with bowls on drumheads), the player is instructed to “explore the sound,” especially by manipulating the pedal(s) to discover various resonances. Of special interest is the passage in which the player performs a tremolo on the mixing bowl (with soft mallets) while it is on Drum III (about 13 minutes into the piece). Although the basic instruction is simply to continue the tremolo over the time-span indicated, the player should speed up, slow down, and introduce brief pauses, as well as explore gradations of dynamics while slowly and subtly exploring various pedal positions and glissandi. In this section it is particularly important for the player to locate the pedal position at which the bowl vibrates intensely on the drumhead (this will, in turn, “activate” the various preparations on the drum). The overall shape of this process is entirely up to the player, but it should focus largely on an exploration of the sound produced by the pedal glissando, and the effect of the vibrating bowl. The end of the piece is taken up with a similar exploration of pedal positions and glissandi on Drums I and II, as they react to the resonating sound of the two prayer bowls. The “exploration” of the sound in this final section should be slow and subtle.

PITCH CHOICES: ABOUT THE FIRST PERFORMANCE

This piece is notated in such a way as to facilitate performances with various specific preparations. No indication is given with regard to pitch selection, but the following, based on the composer’s decisions leading to the first performance (and underlying the work’s composition), should be kept in mind:

Bowls: The initial pitch consideration in this piece comes from the selection of the mixing bowl and prayer bowls. While timpani are specifically designed to accommodate a range of pitches, it is much more practically difficult to acquire bowls with specifically required pitches (this is especially the case with the mixing bowl). Consequently, the bowls should be selected first, and then drum pitches selected based on those presented by the bowls. Perhaps the only “rule” that should be laid down in respect to the selection of pitches for the bowls is that there should be no tonal redundancy (i.e., each instrument should present a unique pitch structure). This is simply in order to ensure as much variety as possible within the context of a largely unified and uniform composition.

For the first performance:

- The mixing bowl presented the following pitch profile: strong sense of C4, secondary sense of E5
- The two prayer bowls spoke clearly on the following pitches: A4, G5

Drums: The pitches of the drums should be based upon those of the bowls. However, they need not simply replicate those of the bowls (they did for the first performance) – they may echo the bowls in transposition, or inversion, for example. The number of drums called for makes it likely (though not inevitable, as the tonal profile of the bowls may be quite complex) that additional choices will need to be made – these choices should be as tasteful as possible. Drum II presents a special situation, because it is prepared from the beginning, and, hence, projects its pitch in a somewhat masked manner throughout – this can be thought of as a “coloring agent,” and need not relate directly to the pitches of the bowls.

For the first performance: the drums were tuned as follows:

- Drum I: C2; Drum II: F#2; Drum III: A2; Drum IV: E3, Drum V: G3

(0')

1'

[RH: 1 Soft Mallet] at center of drum

(at center)

(simile)

(RH)

1'

2'

A start at edge and gradually move to center

[LH: pickup shaker]

[LH: put down shaker]

A start at

(RH)

(RH)

2'

3'

edge and gradually move to center

[LH: 1 Soft Mallet]

[LH: put down mallet + pickup shaker]

3' (LH)

4'

A start at edge and gradually move to center

[RH: put down soft mallet]

(RH)

4'

5'

+ → "finger trill" - "outs; de the edge" [LH: still holding shaker, pick up 1 med. mallet]

[quickly transfer mallet to RH] B play entire rhythm with shaker, while doubling accented notes on drum

(RH)

(RH)

5'

(LH)

[RH: pickup additional med. mallet I] [LH: put down shaker]

[quickly transfer 1 mallet to LH] play Part 1 of rhythm on Drum III and Part 2 on Drum II

[transfer mallet to RH] "finger trill" - "outside the edge"

(RH: one-handed roll)

(LH)

6'

(RH)

(LH)

[while continuing "finger trill" execute rhythm on drumhead, gradually moving from edge to center] (RH: med. mallet)

("finger trill" continues) [RH: put down 1 mallet and pickup shaker]

[LH: pickup 2 rubber mallets]

7'

(med. mallet)

(RH)

(LH)

[while holding shaker in RH, RH executes rhythm: Part 1 on Drum III, Part 2 on Drum II - LH plays accented notes on Drums I and II]

shaker continues

[RH: put down shaker and pickup additional med. mallet]

(RH: one-handed roll)

(LH: one-handed roll)

8'

[while continuing roll with RH, LH plays rhythm dispersed among the bodies of the remaining drums]

(RH: one-handed roll)

[as before]

(LH)

9'

(LH)

(RH)

(RH)

[LH: put down mallets and pickup shaker]

[LH: play entire rhythm with shaker] [RH: play accented notes on Drum II and remainder on Drum I]

[LH: put down shaker, pickup "low bracelet and put on consist"]

10'

10' 11'

[LH: pick up and activate string of bells]

(RH)

[LH: while continuing to activate them, gradually lower bells onto Drum III, halfway between edge and center]

(one-handed roll)

[LH: remove bracelet and place on Drum III, halfway between edge and center]

[A] (RH:) perform rhythm on Drum III, while continuing "finger trill" (LH) on Drum I

(LH: "finger trill" + normal playing location)

11' 12'

[RH: transfer mallets to LH]

(RH: "finger trill") [LH: place mixing bowl in center of Drum III]

[RH: pick up "high" bracelet]

(RH)

[LH: switch to: 2 rubber mallets]

(LH: one-handed roll)

12' 13'

[B] RH: play entire rhythm with bracelet
LH: play accented notes on mixing bowl (◇) and remainder on Drum III (●)

[RH: put down bracelet]

(LH: one-handed roll)

(LH)

"explode the sound" - pedal ad lib.

[LH+RH: switch to: 2 soft mallets]

13' 14'

"explode the sound" - roll on mixing bowl while manipulating the pedal

(ped. ad lib.)

14' 15'

[RH: transfer mallet (RH: "finger trill") to LH]

[LH: put down mallets, place "low" prayer bowl at center of Drum I, place "high" prayer bowl at center of Drum II; pick up: 2 rubber mallets]

[transfer 1 mallet to RH]

[B] part 1: on Drum I: play first note on prayer bowl (◇) and remainder on drum (●); Part 2: same procedure on Drum II

15' 16'

[B] simile

[B] (simile)

16' 17'

[B] activate bracelets (high and low) while picking them up and placing them on wrists

[C] play the rhythm randomly dispersed across the bodies of all 5 drums

[C] simile

17' 18'

[LH: transfer mallet to RH] [LH: remove and put down bracelet] [switch mallets to LH] [RH: remove and put down bracelet]

[A] perform rhythm with finger tip at center of drum

(RH: one-handed roll) (LH: over-handed roll) (RH)

18' 19'

[transfer I mallet to RH]

"explore the sound" - ped. ad lib. (from here to end)

19' 20'

continue pedal exploration until 20', then stop, but do not break concentration until the sound has entirely died away