

Alex Temple

Ah yes, the three genders
(2019, r. 2020)
for percussion duo

commissioned by Spectrum Ensemble
and the following consortium members:

Brian Calhoon

Scott Charvet & Elayne Harris

Emily Durocher

Beth Gunderia

Carla Lackey

Modern Marimba

Kathleen Rieken

Julie Taber

The Up:Strike Project (directed by Dr. Matthew Lau & Karen Yu)

Gloria Yehilevsky

Instrumentation

Percussion 1:

- vibraphone (F3–F6)

Percussion 2:

- desk bells (C6–C7, chromatic)
- 2 cymbals with different timbres
- thick metal chain
- 2 wooden shakers
- 3 wooden temple blocks (ideally with the approximate pitches E, F# and A#)
- 2 toms + kick

Program Notes

"Ah yes, the three genders." The meme started as a joking response to things like a trio of airport signs labeled "Men," "Women" and "Telephones," or an application form whose options are "Male," "Female" and "Business." Over time, it was extended to refer to any group of three things. In the case, the three genders are metal, wood and skin – the three materials that pair with the vibraphone in the piece's three movements. The title is also a playful nod to my and the performers' queerness.

"Metal" (featuring cymbals, bells and chains) consists of three versions of the same tune, in three wildly different styles: haunted music-box lullaby, chill-out jazz, and Very Fake Early Music. "Wood" (featuring woodblocks and shakers) is a perpetuum mobile with a habit of getting stuck. "Skin" (featuring drums and mouth sounds) is the longest and maybe the strangest, with dissonant, sensuous chords that keep getting diverted into blurry polyphony or staggering polyrhythms.

Performance Instructions

All non-standard notation is explained in the score.

Exaggerate the stylistic and dynamic contrasts! "Good taste" is nothing but a means of social control!

1. Metal

$\text{♩} = 88$
hard mallets
motor: off

p *sim.*

Desk Bells

Cymbals brushes

p like a haunted music box

8

mp *minimal pedal*

Cymbals brushes

Desk Bells

mp

14

$\text{♩} = 92$

mf *f* *p*

Cymbals
loop end of brushes;
hit sides of cymbals

f *p*

precise, like a ceremonial act

A

soft mallets
roll chords ad lib

20

sensuous, rhythmically free
use pedals to bring out the melody
while the chords sustain

normal end of brushes
improvise: quiet, dense, rhythmically
irregular, lots of reverberation

mf

fp

24

pp

pp

28

f *p*

ped. _____ pedal as before pedal every measure

mf

33

♩ = 100

f

loop end of brushes;
hit sides of cymbals

p

B ♩ = 94

39 hard mallets

regal, fanfaric, processional
pedal every note

Chain
pick up slowly and then suddenly drop

Desk Bells

mf

43 ♩ = 88

mp

Chain

Desk Bells

mp

p

53 ♩ = 104

(silent on repeats)

Cymbals
loop end of brushes;
hit sides of cymbals

repeat 3-4 times
while fading to silence

f

19 B ♩ = 120

ff *p* *a gentle waltz* *mf*

Wooden Shakers *p* *mf*

24

mp *f* *pp* *hushed*

mp *f* *fp* *fp*

28

fp *fp*

slow down shaking
and let it peter out

C

34 $\text{♩} = 180$ soft mallets

p

pp *p*

39

ff

Temple blocks

mf *ff*

D

43

f *mf* *mp*

f *mf* *mp*

48

p *pp*

p *pp*

52

Musical score for measures 52-56. The top staff is a treble clef with a key signature of two flats and a 4/4 time signature. The bottom staff is a bass clef with a key signature of two flats and a 4/4 time signature. The music consists of eighth and sixteenth notes with various accidentals.

57

Musical score for measures 57-61. The top staff is a treble clef with a key signature of two flats and a 4/4 time signature. The bottom staff is a bass clef with a key signature of two flats and a 4/4 time signature. The music consists of eighth and sixteenth notes with various accidentals. A dynamic marking of *mp* is present.

mp

Wooden Shakers

Musical score for wooden shakers for measures 57-61. The staff is a bass clef with a key signature of two flats and a 4/4 time signature. The music consists of eighth and sixteenth notes with various accidentals. A dynamic marking of *mp* is present.

mp

62

Rit ----- E

(♩ = ♩, not counting the rit.)

Musical score for measures 62-66. The top staff is a treble clef with a key signature of two flats and a 4/4 time signature. The bottom staff is a bass clef with a key signature of two flats and a 4/4 time signature. The music consists of eighth and sixteenth notes with various accidentals. A dynamic marking of *mf* is present.

mf

(*mf*)

mf

(*mf*)

67

Musical score for measures 67-71. The top staff is a treble clef with a key signature of two flats and a 4/4 time signature. The bottom staff is a bass clef with a key signature of two flats and a 4/4 time signature. The music consists of eighth and sixteenth notes with various accidentals. Dynamic markings of *f*, *mp*, *f*, and *pp* are present.

f *mp* *f* *pp*

f *mp* *f*

3. Skin

$\text{♩} = 80$
motor: slow
hard mallets

p *leg.* let ring until almost silent

pickup on repeat only $\text{♩} = 84$

6 $\text{♩} = 76$

mf *leg.* *p* (in time)

Drums *pp*

12 $\text{♩} = 84$

mf *p* mysterious and reverent
pedal just enough to keep the line legato

mp *pp*

A

♩ = 88

sing on "da"; informal, almost absent-minded;
blend timbrally with the vibes as much as possible;
transpose up or down an octave if necessary

♩ = 96

17

pp

f *startling*

sticks

mf (pickup in new tempo)

24

gradually shift from /a/ to /ŋ/

n

B ♩ = 92
motor: fast
soft mallets

pp minimal pedal

unvoiced percussive mouth sounds
(e.g. a bilabial or retroflex ejective);
control the contour via embouchure

brushes

p

30

35

p

39

C

ff broad, lyrical

like a series of rapidly fading echoes

mf *mf* *mf* *mf* *mf* *mf*

43

mf *mf* *mf*

48

$\text{♩} = 80$
D motor: slow
hard mallets

p

n

leg.

54

$\text{♩} = 84$

p

mf

leg.