PANELS (2014)

Written for Sound and Music and NMC's Next Wave programme (2014). Awarded the George Butterworth Prize (2015).

PERFORMANCE NOTES

Instrumentation

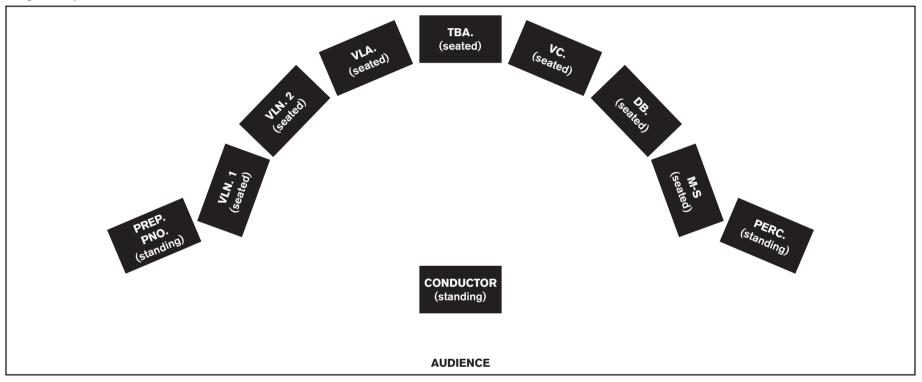
Tuba (in C) Percussion Prepared Piano Mezzo-Soprano Violin 1 Violin 2 Viola Cello Double Bass

To be conducted.

Duration: ca. 8 minutes

The performers of the Percussion and Prepared Piano parts should be standing throughout the performance. All other performers should be seated. The entry and exit of each gesture should be sudden, even if the gesture is quiet or subtle. It should sound as though the sounds are being triggered by a sampler. To emphasise this, the performers should remain silent and frozen when not playing, unless specified otherwise.

Stage Setup



Percussion Setup

The required instruments for this part are a prepared snare drum (with a coated top head), a bass drum and a tam-tam.

The snare drum should be prepared by crudely sticking 4 x ca. 15 cm strips of duct tape beside one another on the top head, ca. 10 cm from the edge. Another 4 x ca. 15 cm strips should be crudely stuck beside one another on top of, and at a perpendicular angle to these strips. The surface of this duct tape should be uneven, and make a frictional sound when scratched with one's fingers. A ca. 15 cm strip of sandpaper tape should be stuck on the top head, ca. 10 cm from the edge. A ca. 40 cm x 40 cm microfibre cloth should be placed on the top head, to the side and out of the way, in order to suppress the resonance. The performer should not directly interact with the cloth. If it gets in the way of a gesture, it should be moved to another part of the top head. See fig. 1 for the location of these preparations. The prepared snare drum should be placed on a high stand so that is playable while the performer is standing.

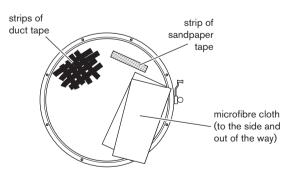


Fig. 1: Preparation of snare drum.

The performer is required to have 2 x retractable metal-stranded drum brushes (referred to as "Brush 1" and "Brush 2" throughout the score), 1 x superball mallet with a plastic stick ca. 0.7 cm in diameter, 1 x bow, and 2 x very soft large-headed mallets (referred to as "Large Soft Mallet 1" and "Large Soft Mallet 2").

Brushes 1 and 2 should be half-open throughout the performance.

Prepared Piano Setup

The top 34 notes (E > 5-C8) should be prepared with adhesive-tack (e.g. Blu-Tack). A sphere of tack, ca. 1.5 cm in diameter, should be placed on the strings of each note, just in front of the bridge, in order to suppress the pitch and resonance of the notes, giving them an almost bubble wrap-like quality. Additional spheres of tack should be placed on the half-way point of the strings of the notes G6 and D7, between the agraffe and the bridge to modify the tone of these notes further, giving them a slightly deeper percussive quality. See fig. 2 for the location of these preparations.

(Continued on the next page).

Prepared Piano Setup (continued)

A ca. 80 cm rosined nylon fishing line (1 mm in diameter) should be threaded under the strings of the note B4, behind the bridge (see fig. 2). Each end of the fishing line should be stuck to the frame with adhesive-tack when it is not being used, so it doesn't get in the way or affect another gesture.

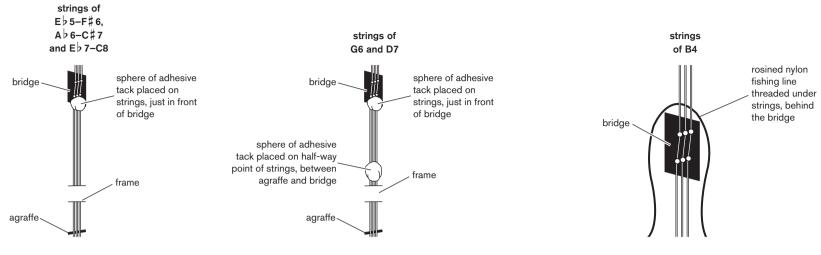


Fig. 2: Preparation of piano.

The performer is required to have 2 x retractable metal-stranded drum brushes (referred to as "Brush 1" and "Brush 2" throughout) and 2 x soft timpani mallets (referred to as "Soft Mallet 1" and "Soft Mallet 2").

Brushes 1 and 2 should be half-open throughout the performance.

Violin 1 Bow Setup

The performer is required to have 2 x bows. Bow 1 should be loosened to the point where the hair hangs with significantly less tension than normal. Bow 2 should be set to the standard tension.

Violin 2 Bow Setup

The performer is required to have 1 x bow, which should be loosened to the point where the hair hangs with significantly less tension than normal.

Viola Bow Setup

The performer is required to have 2 x bows. Bow 1 should be loosened to the point where the hair hangs with significantly less tension than normal. Bow 2 should be set to the standard tension.

Cello Bow Setup

The performer is required to have 1 x bow, which should be loosened to the point where the hair hangs with significantly less tension than normal.

Double Bass Bow Setup

The performer is required have 2 x bows. Bow 1 should be slightly loosened so that the hair hangs with less tension than normal. Bow 2 should be set to the standard tension.

Clefs

Violin 1, Violin 2, Viola and Cello



Adapted tablature clef. The lines of the corresponding stave signify the individual strings of the instrument, where the top line is string I. This is similar to a guitar tablature clef/stave, though standard rhythmic figures are written on it and it therefore only shows the performer what string to focus on, rather than the position of their fingers on the fingerboard.

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I II IV B of instrument. As with the adapted tablature clef, the top four lines of the corresponding stave signify the strings. The additional "B" on the clef and dotted lower line on the corresponding stave refers to the belly (and also, where specified, the bridge face) of the instrument. On the stave, the distance between the dotted lower line and the solid line above it (representing string IV) is greater than the distances between each of the solid lines, in order to further distinguish it, visually speaking, from the rest.

(Continued on the next page).

Symbols (in order of appearance)

Tuba and Mezzo-Soprano



Silent held action. This symbol is used to signify when the performer should carry out a specific silent action (the nature of which is described above the note in text) and hold the described position, silent and frozen until indicated otherwise. The performer should think of these silent actions as choreography.



Modulate between mp and ff at one's discretion.

Percussion



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Prepared Piano



Silent held action. This symbol is used to signify when the performer should carry out a specific silent action (the nature of which is described above the note in text) and hold the described position, silent and frozen until indicated otherwise. Actions that don't relate to a specific pitch are written on a one line percussion stave. The performer should think of these silent actions as choreography.



Range of notes between lowest and highest written pitches. In this case, the range is between A0 and A1.

Violin 1



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Dashed tie. This is used instead of a standard tie when the specific continued action results in a fragmented sound (e.g. tremolo) rather than a sustained sound. `-----

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Mod. between mp and ff

Modulate between *mp* and *ff* at one's discretion.



Vertical tremolo. Lean the hair side of the bow quite firmly against the given string(s) and drag it over and back as quickly as possible along ca. 2 cm length(s) of the string(s). Ensure there are no discernible pitches or scratch tone-like sounds.



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mp and $f\!\!f$

Modulate between *mp* and *ff* at one's discretion.

Symbols (continued)

Viola and Cello



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Double Bass



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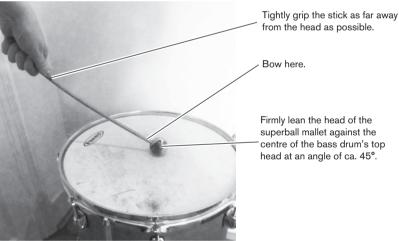
Images of Selected Gestures Percussion



Prepared snare drum: Tremolo drag Brush 1 against the top head (bar 10).

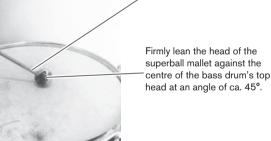
Tightly grip the brush like a pen, ca. 4 cm from the tips of its strands.

Drag the brush over and back as quickly as possible on a 4 cm² area of the top head.



Bass drum: Bow the plastic stick of the superball mallet against the top head (though a floor tom is pictured above, bar 22).







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Mod. between mp and ff

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from the head as possible.

Firmly lean the head of the superball mallet against the





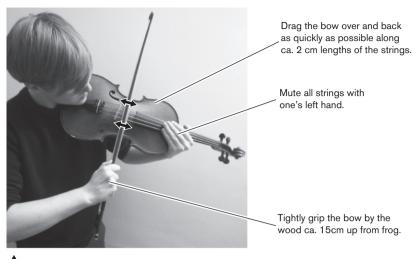
Tightly pinch each of the brushes by its strands. ca. 4 cm from the tips.

Prepared snare drum: Stir Brushes 1 and 2 into the outer edge of the top head (only Brush 1 is shown here for clarity, bar 37).

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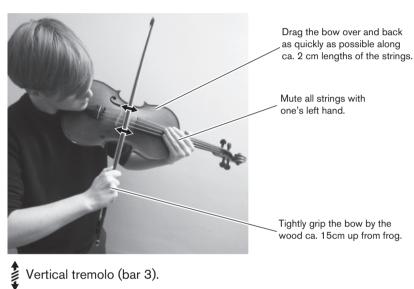
Prepared snare drum: Busily scratch and scurry on the duct tape with one's fingers and thumb (bar 57).

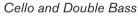
Images of Selected Gestures (continued) Violin 1 and Viola

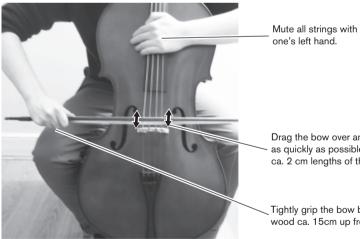


Vertical tremolo (bar 3).

Violin 2



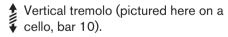


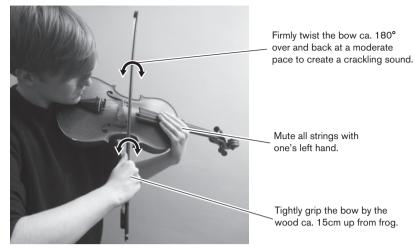


one's left hand.

Drag the bow over and back as quickly as possible along ca. 2 cm lengths of the strings.

Tightly grip the bow by the wood ca. 15cm up from frog.





Twist Bow 1 against the strings (bar 37).

vi



Paul McGuire

