Andrew Nathaniel McIntosh

I Hold the Lion’s Paw

for percussion quartet

(2013-2014)

PLAINSOUND MUSIC EDITION
commissioned by Raulee Marcus, Steve Block, and Leslie Lassiter for the Los Angeles Percussion Quartet
Instruments:
(surrounding the audience, with a percussionist at each corner)

**Percussion I (front left)**
vibraphone
6 pieces of resonant metal (gongs, bell plates, etc.), tuned as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Note</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>226.9 Hz</td>
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<tr>
<td>330 Hz</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>371.3 Hz</td>
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<tr>
<td>377.1 Hz</td>
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<tr>
<td>396 Hz</td>
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<td>495 Hz</td>
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<tr>
<td>565.7 Hz</td>
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<tr>
<td>577.5 Hz</td>
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<td>660 Hz</td>
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<tr>
<td>680.6 Hz</td>
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<tr>
<td>848.6 Hz</td>
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<tr>
<td>866.3 Hz</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>990 Hz</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

low drum
pair of bongos
wine glass tuned to F (704 Hz)
2 medium cymbals
ceramic bowl of water
small semi-resonant bell

**Percussion II (front right)**
glockenspiel (one that is possible to bow)
set of 13 custom-built aluminum pipes, tuned as follows:

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low drum
snare drum
wine glass tuned to D (587 Hz)
2 medium cymbals
ceramic bowl of water
small semi-resonant bell

**Percussion III (back right)**
vibraphone
crotale (2 octaves)
3 low drums
2 wood blocks
triangle
2 medium cymbals
ceramic bowl of water
small semi-resonant bell

**Percussion IV (back left)**
xylophone
crotale (2 octaves)
low drum
snare drum
triangle
2 medium cymbals
ceramic bowl of water
small semi-resonant bell
Notes:

Regarding the spatialization:
It is preferable to perform the piece without a click track and without an external conductor. Some of the rhythms are intricate, and while it would be ideal for them to be realized as tightly as possible, the distance was also taken into account when considering the material in the piece. Some degree of occasional rhythmic fogginess is to be expected, as well as a lot of visual communication between the players. It also may be possible to have audience members both inside of and outside of the quartet.

Regarding the cymbals:
Please choose cymbals that have a clean and somewhat dry sound, more along the lines of a jazz drum set than an orchestral cymbal. The overall sound of all the cymbals together should be mid-range, full, and blended, without any single cymbals sticking out of the texture. However, there can be quite a bit of variation within that sound and each player should choose two cymbals that are noticeably different from each other.

Regarding the low drums:
These should be as deep and powerful as possible, and the instruments should be unified in timbre across the quartet (with the exception of two additional slightly smaller drums in the Percussion III part). Traditional options could range from low floor toms to concert bass drums, but non-Western drums could also be very effective.

Regarding the water:
Each percussionist will need some sort of vessel for water, which will be poured quietly into bowls and wine glasses periodically.

Regarding the ringing metal in Percussion I:
Ideally all the pieces of metal will blend with each other well, but they don’t necessarily have to be from the same instrument family (gongs, bell plates, etc.). The pitch is more important than the timbre in this case, and some timbral coloration from note to note is to be expected. If there are options, then the loudest and most resonant option should be chosen. If it is not possible to procure the lowest B for a performance then a second B an octave higher can be used. The louder of the two unison B’s should then be substituted for the low pitch. If many options are available then the entire set of pitches (not including the high C#) could also be transposed down one octave.

Regarding the aluminum pipes in Percussion II:
It is relatively easy and inexpensive to construct these with a simple pipe-cutter, measuring tape, and calculator. Please contact the composer for more information at mcintosh@plainsound.org. It may also be possible to rent or borrow a previously existing set of pipes.

Duration: 38 minutes
for the Los Angeles Percussion Quartet

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\[ \frac{\text{ceramic bowl of water, } 1/3 \text{ full, medium mallets}}{\text{(periodically and subtly add water, once or twice per measure)}} \]

\[
\begin{array}{ccccccc}
I & f & . & . & . & . & . \\
II & \text{mp} & . & . & . & . & . \\
III & \text{mp} & . & . & . & . & . \\
IV & \text{mp} & . & . & . & . & . \\
\end{array}
\]

\[ \text{adding water} \]

\[ \text{periodically and subtly add water, once or twice per measure} \]

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(stop adding water) *see note
*cymbals, drum sticks
starting near the center and gradually working outwards

*Whenever there is a long enough rest, from here to the end of the piece, continue playing the bowls of water. Gradually increase the space between attacks, alternating between blocks of 30-60" of adding water in between notes and longer periods without adding water. Dynamics ad. lib.