

Steven Snowden

A Man with a Gun Lives Here

I - Be Prepared to Defend Yourself
II - There are Thieves About
III - A Man with a Gun Lives Here

*For three percussionists
and one bass drum*

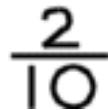
A Man with a Gun Lives Here

Commissioned by
line upon line Percussion



I – Be Prepared to Defend Yourself

II – There are Thieves About



III – A Man with a Gun Lives Here

Most prevalent during the Great Depression, hobos were nomads who roamed the United States taking work wherever they could. In their extensive travels, hobos learned to leave notes for each other, giving information about places to camp, where to find a meal, or dangers that lay ahead. This unique Hobo Code was known to the brotherhood of freight train riders and used by all to keep the community of traveling workers safe, fed and in work.

Life as a hobo was difficult and dangerous. These vagabonds developed their own secret pictographic language to help other hobos to food, water and work or to direct them away from dangerous situations. The Hobo Code is a fascinating system of symbols understood among the hobo community. Because hobos weren't typically welcomed (and were often illiterate), messages left for others in the community had to be easy for hobos to read but look like little more than random markings to everyone else to maintain an element of secrecy. Scrawled in places where hobos were likely to convene, the purpose of the code was not only to help other hobos find what they needed, but to keep the entire lifestyle possible for everyone.

Each movement of this piece is based on one of these symbols and, just like those resourceful hobos, makes use of very limited materials. All activity is centered on a single bass drum. Other items utilized include steel plates, rubber balls, and a paper bag containing 3 lbs of loose buckshot.

The Gear

Items required for this piece:

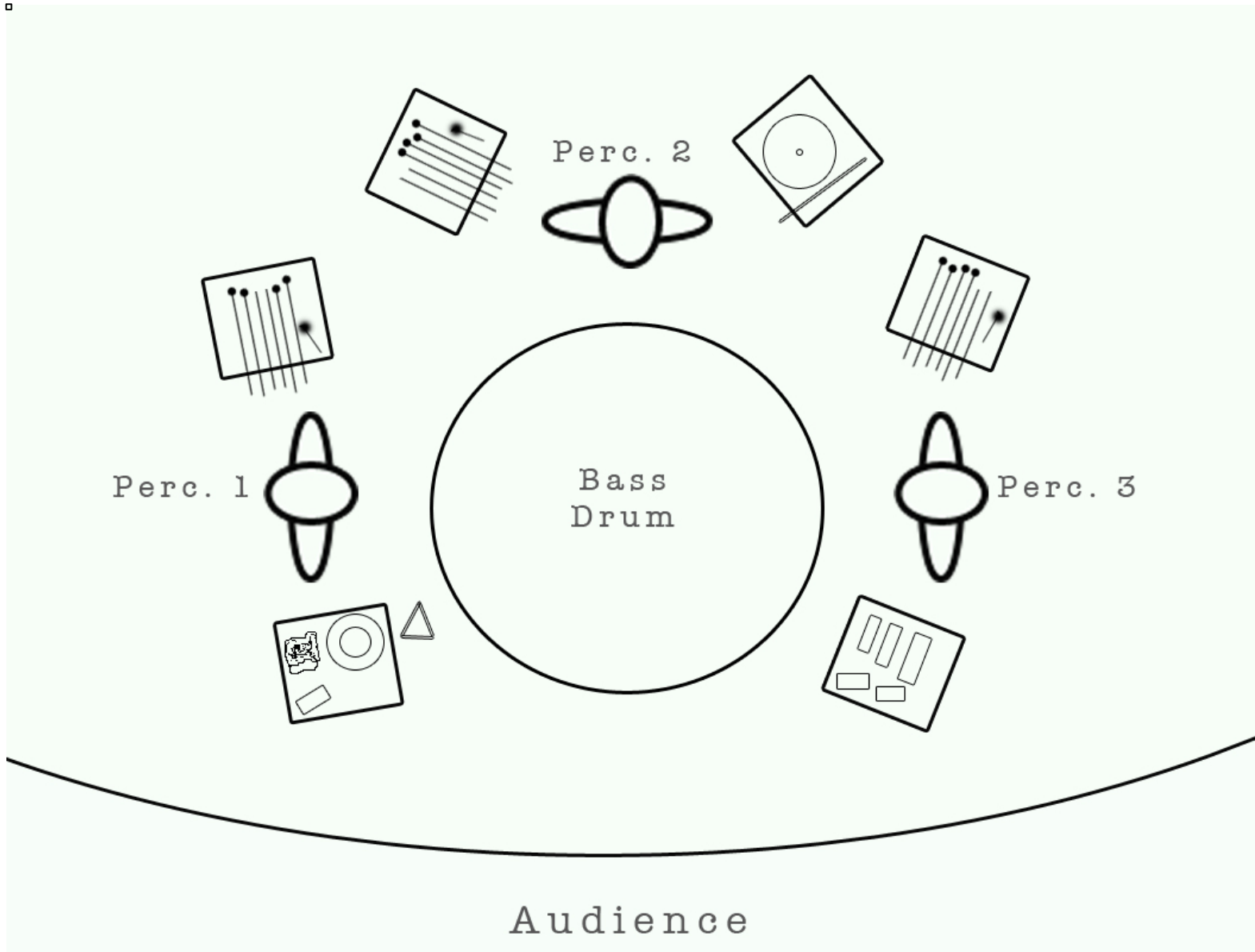
- 1 Concert Bass Drum
- 1 Brake Drum
- 1 Triangle
- 1 Jing Cymbal
- 3 Wood Blocks
- 3 Steel plates
- A sturdy paper bag containing
- 3 lbs of loose buckshot

Mallets etc.

- 3 pairs of Light Snare Sticks
- 1 bass drum mallet
- 1 pair of hot rods
- 3 superballs
- 1 bass bow
- 3 pairs of hard plastic rattan mallets
- 3 pairs of retractable wire brushes
- 3 pairs of timbale sticks

This piece is typically performed either from memory or with all players sharing one large score positioned at the front of the drum. I have page turns marked in the score to help sort out which player should turn the page at any given time.

The Setup



As indicated by the diagram above, the bass drum should be turned on its stand so that the drumhead is parallel to the floor. Each player should have one stand for the various mallets used throughout the piece and one stand or small table for their respective auxiliary instruments. Only three instruments in the piece are not played on the head of the drum: Woodblocks (perc. 3) Brake Drum and Triangle (perc. 1). The wood blocks and brake drum should be played on their table and the triangle should be mounted somewhere near the brake drum.

Notation

Mvt. 1 - Be Prepared to Defend Yourself

	Bass Drum				Drag Buzz	Brake Drum	Triangle	Superball on BD Head		
	Stand	Shell	Rim	Head						
Perc. 1	•	•	•	•	x	x	▲	•		
Perc. 2	•	•	•	•	x	•	•	•	•	•
Perc. 3	•	•	•	•	x	3 Woodblocks		•		

Mvt. 2 - There Are Thieves About

Mvt. 3 - A Man with a Gun Lives Here

-Explanation of some extended performance techniques used in each movement.

Mvt. 1 - Be Prepared to Defend Yourself

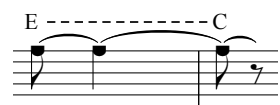
-Superball:

The three Superballs used in this work should be of graduated sizes. The smallest of which should go to player 1 and the largest to player 3. Each superball should be pierced by a wire or paperclip to act as a handle. The superball should be pulled by the paperclip with enough downward pressure so that sufficient friction is generated and the drumhead produces a distinct moaning sound. The location and direction of the superball on the drumhead is indicated by letters and dashed lines.

E = Edge

N = Normal (about 1/3 of the diameter from the edge)

C = Center

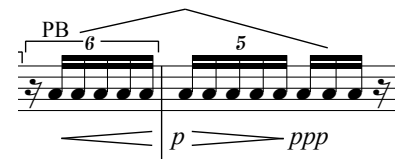
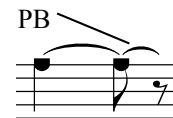


In this example, the superball is rubbed on the head of the drum from the edge toward the center over the course of two beats.

-Pitch Bend:

Applying varying degrees of pressure to the head of the drum can produce some subtle pitch bending effects. I've found that this effect is most prominent near the edge of the head.

In this example, the superball is rubbed on the head of the drum in close proximity to the point of pressure application. The player starts by pressing firmly on the head with his or her thumb, rubbing the superball with the other hand near that point of pressure and reducing the degree of pressure over the course of 1.5 beats. This should produce a kind of sighing moan sound.



In this example the same procedure is followed, however the head is struck near the point of pressure.

-Drag Buzz:

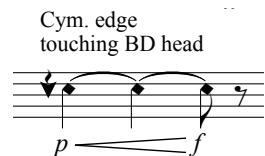
This effect is executed by allowing stick tips or mallet heads to lightly rest on the head of the drum while it is still vibrating. This should produce a "broken snare" sound that changes in timbre according to the location and degree of vibration on the drumhead.

In this example, the tips of snare sticks are lightly held and rested on the head of the drum near the edge. Over the course of six beats, the stick tips move from the edge to the center.



-Cymbal Bow:

The cymbal should be placed on its bell on the head of the drum near the edge. A few inches of the edge of the cymbal should be protruding over the rim of the drum to facilitate bowing. The cymbal should be held in place by the inside of the bell and, unless otherwise indicated, the bell should be the only part of the cymbal touching the drum.



In this exception, the cymbal is tilted toward the drumhead so that the edge of the cymbal lightly touches it. This should produce more sympathetic vibration of the drumhead.

Mvt. 2 - There Are Thieves About

-Cymbal Blow:

Because the edge of the jing cymbal is slightly upturned, an interesting effect can be achieved when used in conjunction with a drum. The cymbal is placed on the drumhead with the bell up and the player puts a little pressure on it. By blowing through the mounting hole, the cymbal and drum act much like the reed and mouthpiece of a woodwind instrument. As the air escapes, the flexible drumhead rapidly vibrates against the cymbal and produces a very loud and distinct howl.



Some control of pitch can be achieved by changing the amount of pressure on the cymbal.

-Rattan Bounce:



This effect is achieved by striking the rim of the drum with the shaft of a rattan mallet. Initial contact should be made close to the hand and the player should quickly pull the mallet toward himself or herself while continuing to apply downward pressure. Because of the flexible nature of rattan, the shaft will rapidly bounce against the rim and produce a sense of rising pitch as the point of contact moves toward the head.

-Steel Plates:

Three small, thick steel plates are placed on the head of the drum at the beginning of the second movement. These plates do not need to produce specific pitches, though they should be of a size and shape that allows them to ring for at least a few seconds. These plates should be attached to small foam pieces so that they sit just above the surface of the drumhead. Unless otherwise indicated, they should be struck in the center. Line upon line percussion specifically used 1/4" steel plates that were 4" wide and 8", 10" and 12" long.



-Corner Strike:

When a corner strike is indicated the steel plate should be struck on the corner with sufficient force so that it wobbles slightly and the corner makes occasional contact with the drumhead.

Mvt. 3 - A Man with a Gun Lives Here

The paper bag

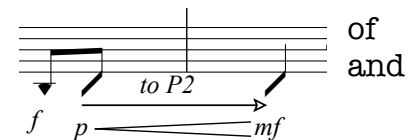
-Bag Grab:

The bag is grabbed to create a percussive crunch sound to work in rhythm with the other players. It is also a means to facilitate all other techniques performed with the bag.

-Bag Slide:

The bag is slid across the head of the drum toward another player or from the center of the drumhead toward the edge.

In this example, the bag is grabbed then slid across the head of the drum to player 2 over the course of 1.5 beats. The dynamics crescendo marking indicate that the speed at which the bag is slid increases over the course of the rhythmic value indicated.



-Bag Lift:

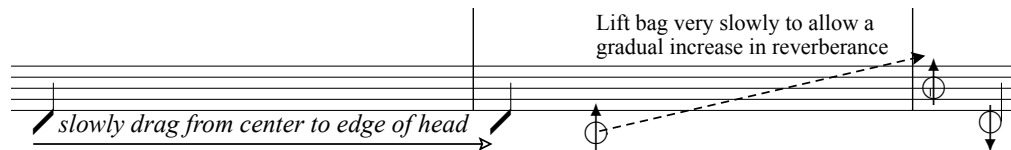
The bag is lifted above the center of the drumhead. The height to which it is lifted depends upon the dynamic marking of the drop immediately following it.

-Bag Drop:

The bag is dropped or forcibly set down on the drumhead. This serves to create a percussive attack as well as control the resonance of the drumhead.

In this example, the bag is pulled toward the player from the center of the drumhead

over the course of 5 beats. It is then slowly lifted over the course of 4 beats and then dropped back onto the center of the head. The overall effect of this technique should serve to gradually increase the degree to which the drumhead is allowed to vibrate and then quickly mute the head when the bag is dropped.



The Buckshot

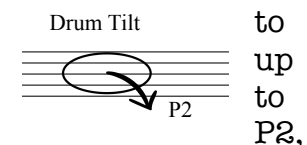
-Bag Stab:



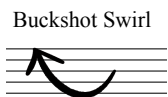
During this climactic moment of the final movement, player 2 holds the paper bag full of buckshot two to three feet above the center of the drumhead. Players one and three will then simultaneously stab the bag with one of their sticks so that the buckshot rains down on the head of the drum. Player two will wait for nearly all of the buckshot to pour out before discarding the bag. If buckshot cannot be obtained, (it is commonly found at stores that specialize in hunting equipment) BB's, pellets or any collection of small round metal fragments will suffice.

-Drum Tilt:

After the buckshot has been poured onto the head of the drum, each player will tilt the drum in one direction to allow all of the buckshot roll to one side of the drum. Specific rhythms are not indicated and it is to each player to determine how slowly he or she will allow the buckshot settle. The direction of the tilt is marked near the point of the arrow. (P1, P3, audience) In this example, the drum is tilted toward player 2.



-Buckshot Swirl:



This technique is called upon after the drum has been tilted and the buckshot has settled to one side of the drumhead. The player runs his or her hand through the buckshot, pushing it towards the center of the drum so that it must roll back to its resting position. The specific duration of the swirl is up to the individual player.

The Brushes

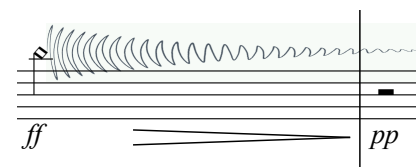
-Brush Sweep:



Rather than serving as a standard roll notation, this example indicates quick and unmeasured sweeps on the head of the drum.

-Brush Whip:

In this example, the player repeatedly whips his or her brushes in the air with gradually less force and speed as indicated by the decrescendo and squiggle.





1. Be Prepared to Defend Yourself

Aggressive ♩ = 54

Steven Snowden

Percussion 1
light snare sticks

Percussion 2
butt of soft BD mallets

Percussion 3
hot-rods

Perc. 1

Perc. 2

Perc. 3

head of BD mallet

Perc. 1

Perc. 2

Perc. 3

PB 5

*P1 turns page

superball drag

C E

11 light snare sticks

Perc. 1
ff *mp* *f* *pp* *f* *pp*

Perc. 2
 butt of soft BD mallets
ff *mp* *f* *pp* *f* *pp*

Perc. 3
 hot-rods
ff *mp* *f* *pp* *f* *pp*

14

Perc. 1
mf *ppp* *p* *ppp*

Perc. 2
 head of BD mallet
mf *ppp* *pp*

Perc. 3
mf *ppp* *p* *ppp* *pp*

17

19 light snare sticks

Perc. 1
p *f* *f* *mp* *f* *pp*

Perc. 2
 butt of soft BD mallets
f *f* *mp* *f* *pp*

Perc. 3
 hot-rods
mp *ppp* *f* *mp* *f* *pp*

21

Perc. 1

Perc. 2

Perc. 3

6 7 PB 6 5 PB drag E - - - - - C
buzz

mp *pp* *p* *ppp* *mf* *mf*

head of BD mallet C - - - - - E E C - - - - - N Butt of BD mallet

6 7 6 5

mp *pp* *p* *ppp* *mf*

E - - - - - E

*P1 turns page

26

Perc. 1

Perc. 2

Perc. 3

light snare sticks

6 7 6 E - - - - - C E

pp *mp* *pp* *p*

E - - - - - N - - - - - E

hot-rods

6 7 6 5

pp *mp* *pp* *p* *ppp* *mp*

*P3 turns page

31 Ominous, foreboding

29

Perc. 1

Perc. 2

Perc. 3

drag E buzz

mf E E C E PB

mp pp 3 p 5 ppp pp mf pp

C C E

Cymbal Bow

distant howling

PB PB

mp pp 6 p 5 ppp p mp pp mf

33

Perc. 1

Perc. 2

Perc. 3

mf ppp mf drag

ppp

Cym. edge touching BD head

Cym. edge touching BD head

mp p f mp p f

ppp mp ppp ff

37

Perc. 1

Perc. 2

Perc. 3

p mf ppp f ff mp

Butt of BD mallet

pp p mf pp

PB E

mf ppp f p ff mp

40 5

Perc. 1 *p* *mf* *ppp* *f* *ff* *pp* *mf* *ff*

Perc. 2 *mp* *p* *mf*

Perc. 3 *mf* *ppp* *f* *p* *ff* *pp* *mf* *ff*

43

Perc. 1 *pp* *p* *mp*

Perc. 2 *mp* *mf*

Perc. 3 *pp* *p* *mp*

45 **Becoming Heavy and Violent** Immediately
mute both
heads of the drum

Perc. 1 *mf* *f* *fff*

Perc. 2 *f* *fff*

Perc. 3 *mf* *f* *fff*

2
10

2. There are Thieves About

Wailing ♩ = 108

Steven Snowden

Brake Drum
Hard Plastic Rattan Mallets

Percussion 1

Percussion 2

Percussion 3

ff pp

cymbal blow
PB

mf < ff p f mf p mf < ff

Heavy Snare Sticks

ff pp ff

6 Plastic Rattan Mallets
Hold head and strike on shaft

Perc. 1

Perc. 2

Perc. 3

f p

p f mp

Plastic Rattan Mallets
Hold head and strike on shaft

9

Perc. 1

Perc. 2

Perc. 3

f p ff

f p ff

12 flip mallets to normal playing position **13 Stealthy, devious**

Perc. 1

Perc. 2

Perc. 3

p

f Superball drag

p

15

Perc. 1

Perc. 2

Perc. 3

mp *ff* *f* *f*

PB cymbal blow

E superball drag E

PB cymbal blow

p

18

Perc. 1

Perc. 2

Perc. 3

mp *ff*

PB

21

Perc. 1

Perc. 2

Perc. 3

f *pp* *ff* *p* *ff* *p*

5 5 5 6

supball drag

E C

*P1 turns page

Perc. 1 *mf* *p* *mf* cymbal blow PB

Perc. 2 *p* *f*

Perc. 3 *mf* *p* *mf*

Perc. 1 *pp* *f*

Perc. 2 *pp* *mf* *ff* *pp*

Perc. 3 *pp* *f*

Perc. 1 *pp* *f* *p* E superbball drag

Perc. 2 *f* *pp* *f*

Perc. 3 *pp* *f* *p*

Perc. 1 C E cymbal blow PB PB

Perc. 2 *mp* *pp* *f* *f*

Perc. 3

40 Becoming hostile

Perc. 1

Perc. 2

Perc. 3

pp *mf* *pp*

43

Perc. 1

Perc. 2

Perc. 3

f *pp* *pp*

46

Perc. 1

Perc. 2

Perc. 3

ff *f* *ff*

*P3 turns page

50

Perc. 1

Perc. 2

Perc. 3

p

superball drag

C

E

cymbal blow

PB

f

p

mp

ff

p

53

Perc. 1

Perc. 2

Perc. 3

p

superball drag

E

E

cymbal blow

PB

f

mf

p

56

Perc. 1

Perc. 2

Perc. 3

f

PB

59

Perc. 1

Perc. 2

Perc. 3

ff

p

ff

p

ff

p

64 confrontational

62

Perc. 1

Perc. 2

Perc. 3

f

p

f

f

65

Perc. 1

Perc. 2

Perc. 3

f

68

Perc. 1

Perc. 2

Perc. 3

ff

ff

ff

71 gradually retreating

Perc. 1

Perc. 2

Perc. 3

f

mf

f

mf

f

mf

mp

74

Perc. 1

Perc. 2

Perc. 3

mp

p

pp

ppp

mp

p

pp

ppp

p

pp

ppp

17 Swelling intensity

Perc. 1

Perc. 2

Perc. 3

19

Perc. 1

Perc. 2

Perc. 3

21

Perc. 1

Perc. 2

Perc. 3

24

Perc. 1

Perc. 2

Perc. 3

27

to P3

*P3 turns page

28

Perc. 1
mf
pp
mp
mf

Perc. 2
f
p
to P1
mf
pp <

Perc. 3
f
p
to P2
mf

31

Perc. 1
pp
f
f
p
to P2
mf

Perc. 2
f
pp
mp
f
f
p
to P1
mf

Perc. 3
Strike with handle
6
back to brush
f
ff
p
f
p
f

34

Perc. 1
f
mf
pp
to P3
p
mf
pp

Perc. 2
f
f

Perc. 3
f
f 3
3

39

42

*P1 turns page

Perc. 1
f

Perc. 2
p
f

Perc. 3
p
f
to P1
f
p
mf

This page intentionally left blank

44

Perc. 1

Perc. 2

Perc. 3

Put brushes at half-choke

p *f* *ff* *f* *pp* *f*

49

Perc. 1

Perc. 2

Perc. 3

to P3

mf *pp* *mf* *pp*

Put brushes at half-choke

to P2

pp

to P1

pp

52

53 Finally in the groove

Perc. 1

Perc. 2

Perc. 3

mp *ff* *p* *f* *f*

Strike with shaft

Strike with brushes

mf *f* *ff* *p* *f* *p* *f*

to P3

f

to P1

55

Perc. 1

Perc. 2

Perc. 3

f *p* *f* *p* *f*

to P2

f *f* *p*

to P3

p

p *f* *p* *f*

58

Perc. 1

Perc. 2

Perc. 3

f *p*

f *p*

p *f* *p* *f*

to P2

f *p*

to P1

p *f* *p* *f*

61

Perc. 1

Perc. 2

Perc. 3

f

f *to P2*

to P3 *p* *f* *p* *f* *f* *p*

f *to P1* *p* *f* *p* *f*

64

Perc. 1

Perc. 2

Perc. 3

p *f* *p* *f* *f* *to P2*

f *to P3* *p* *f* *p* *f*

f *to P1* *p* *f* *p* *f*

*P1 turns page

68 Delicate
chopsticks

Perc. 1

Perc. 2

Perc. 3

pp mp pp mp

chopsticks

mp to P3 pp mp

chopsticks to P1 mp pp

71

Perc. 1

Perc. 2

Perc. 3

mp to P2 pp mp pp mp mp

mp to P3 pp mp pp mp mp

mp pp mp mp mp to P1

74

Perc. 1

Perc. 2

Perc. 3

to P2

to P1

pp mp pp mp pp

76 Ferocious

Perc. 1 timbale sticks *ff*

Perc. 2 timbale sticks *ff*

Perc. 3 timbale sticks *ff* *pp*

79

Perc. 1 *pp*

Perc. 2 *mp* *pp* *mf*

Perc. 3

81

Perc. 1 *mp* *p*

Perc. 2 put a high degree of pressure on the drum head to bend its pitch Lift bag very slowly... *f* *p*

slowly drag from center to edge of head

Perc. 3 *mp* *P3 turns page

20

83

Perc. 1

Perc. 2

Perc. 3

put a high degree of pressure on the drum head to bend its pitch

Lift bag very slowly to allow a gradual increase in reverberance

mf

mf mp

ff mp

slowly drag from center to edge of head

86

Perc. 1

Perc. 2

Perc. 3

put a high degree of pressure on the drum head to bend its pitch

Lift bag very slowly...

mf

fff

f

f

mf

ff

f

slowly drag from center to edge of head

slowly drag from center to edge of head

6

89 Becoming reckless

Perc. 1

Perc. 2

Perc. 3

ff

p

p

ff

p

91

Perc. 1

Perc. 2

Perc. 3

fff


fff


fff

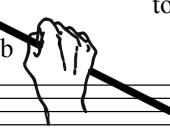
keep bag suspended 3-4 feet above the drum

93 Ruthless

Slow, ritualistic

Bag Stab 

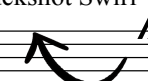
Perc. 1 

Perc. 2 


allow all of the buckshot to rain down on the drumhead

Unceremoniously drop the empty bag to the floor

allow all buckshot to roll to one side of the drum before continuing

Buckshot Swirl 


96 $\text{♩} = 57$ E ----- E ----- E

Perc. 1 

p ----- *f*

Perc. 2 *fff* *ff* *pp*

Perc. 3 *fff* *ff* *pp*

Drum Tilt 

99 E ----- E ----- E ----- E ----- E

Perc. 1 *p* ----- *f* ----- *mp* ----- *f* ----- *p*

Perc. 2 

fff *ff* *pp*


Perc. 3 *fff* *ff* *pp*

Drum Tilt 


104

Perc. 1 *fff* *ff* *pp*

allow all buckshot to slowly settle

Drum Tilt 

Audience

Drum Tilt 

Perc. 2

Perc. 3 *fff* *ff* *pp*