

STEVEN SNOWDEN

UNRUNG

PERCUSSION TRIO

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COMMISSIONED BY
ARC TRIO

PROGRAM NOTES

I've always enjoyed the challenge of writing music for percussion in which the instrumentation is extremely limited. Not only does it make for a more portable/practical piece for the players, but it also forces me to explore every sonic possibility of the given instrument(s). In this case, I wanted to take a very familiar object (the desk bell) and construct a piece around the idea of sonic discovery. I imagined myself as someone who had never seen this object before, but knew that it was designed to produce sound in some manner. Is it meant to be scraped? struck? thrown against the wall?

Additionally, I wanted to use the desk bell as a metaphor for the moment of apprehension just before making a decision that can't be taken back. Ringing that bell is a declaration that you need help from someone you don't personally know and a form of publicly admitting some degree of personal limitation or vulnerability. Despite its small scale, this decision can still stir up a tiny bit of anxiety for some largely due to the fact that it can't be taken back. In short, that bell can't be unrung.

GEAR

Three Desk Bells of differing pitch
Three Bell Plates of differing pitch
Three pairs of Chopsticks

NOTATION

The notation consists of four staves, each representing a different instrument or action:

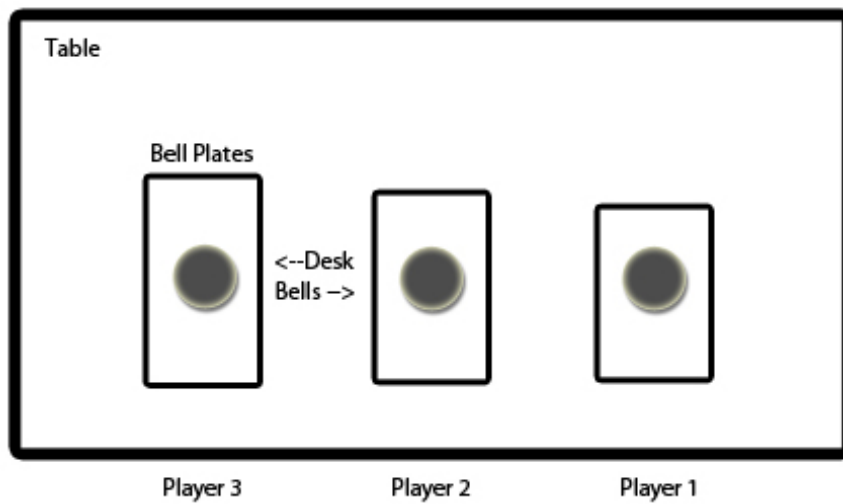
- Desk Bell:** This staff has four measures. Measure 1: "strike side of desk bell with stick" (upward arrow). Measure 2: "scrape from back to front" (upward arrow) and "scrape from front to back" (downward arrow). Measure 3: "Hit top button with hand and immediately mute" (downward arrow with 'x') and "scrape in circular motion" (circle with dashed arrow). Measure 4: "release top button" (upward arrow with 'x') and "hit top button and let it ring" (downward arrow with 'x' and a long note).
- Bell Plate:** This staff has four measures. Measure 1: "scrape from back to front" (upward arrow) and "scrape from front to back" (downward arrow). Measure 2: "scrape in circular motion" (circle with dashed arrow). Measure 3: "strike with stick" (downward arrow). Measure 4: "set down desk bell" (downward arrow with 'x') and "pick up desk bell" (upward arrow with 'x').
- Table:** This staff has four measures. Measure 1: "scrape from back to front" (upward arrow) and "scrape from front to back" (downward arrow). Measure 2: "scrape in circular motion" (circle with dashed arrow). Measure 3: "strike with stick" (downward arrow). Measure 4: "set down desk bell" (downward arrow with 'x') and "pick up desk bell" (upward arrow with 'x').
- Floor:** This staff has four measures. Measure 1: "foot stomp" (downward arrow with 'x'). Measures 2-4: empty.

SETUP

Side view



Bird's Eye View



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Ritualistic, Inquisitive ♩ = 62

Musical score for Percussion 1, 2, and 3, measures 1-6. The score is written in 4/4 time and features a complex, multi-measure rest structure. Percussion 1 has a melodic line starting in measure 5 with a triplet of eighth notes (up, 3, down) marked *mp*. Percussion 2 has a melodic line starting in measure 3 with a triplet of eighth notes (up, 3) marked *mp*. Percussion 3 has a melodic line starting in measure 5 with a triplet of eighth notes (down, up) marked *mp*. Dynamic markings include *ppp* and *p* for Percussion 2. A circled 'X' symbol is present above Percussion 2 in measure 1.

Musical score for Percussion 1, 2, and 3, measures 7-11. The score is written in 3/4 time and features a complex, multi-measure rest structure. Percussion 1 has a melodic line starting in measure 7 with a circled 'X' symbol above it, marked *p*. Percussion 2 has a melodic line starting in measure 7 with a circled 'X' symbol above it, marked *mf*. Percussion 3 has a melodic line starting in measure 7 with a circled 'X' symbol above it, marked *mf*. Dynamic markings include *p*, *mp*, *mf*, and *ppp*. A circled 'X' symbol is present above Percussion 1 in measure 7. The text "grab desk bell" is written above Percussion 1 in measure 7 and above Percussion 2 in measure 10. A circled 'X' symbol is present above Percussion 2 in measure 10.

16

13

Perc. 1

Perc. 2

Perc. 3

p *f* *mp* *ppp*

f *mp*

sim...

18

Perc. 1

Perc. 2

Perc. 3

mp *ppp* *ppp*

mp *ppp*

sim...

21

Perc. 1


Perc. 2

Perc. 3

mp *ppp* *pp*

accel.

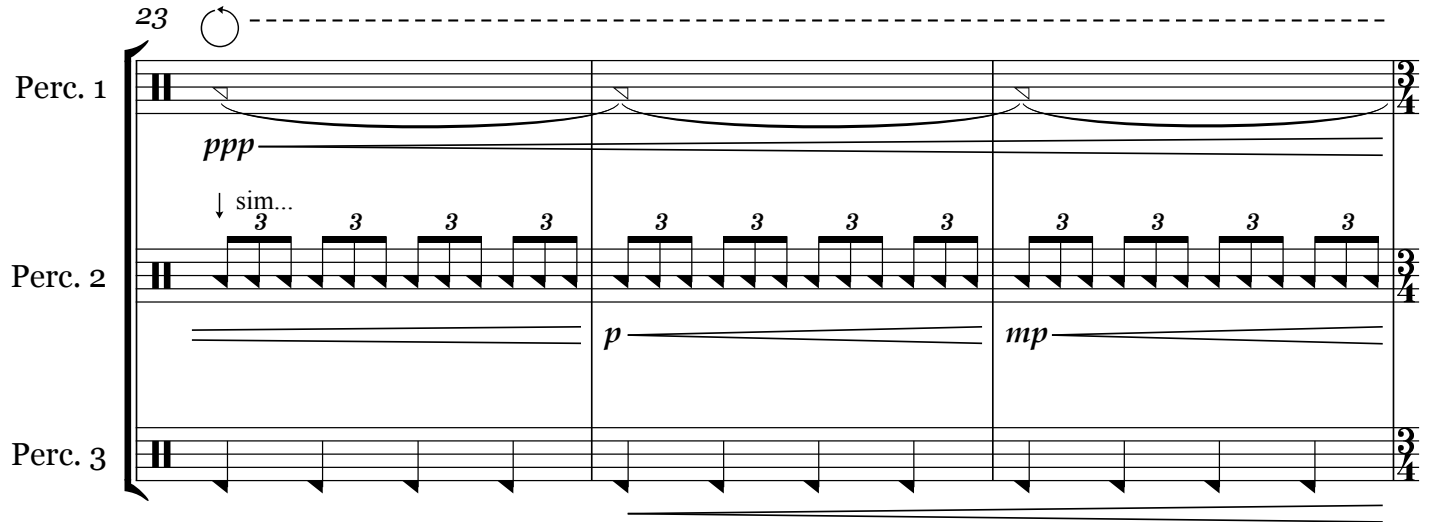
3

23 

Perc. 1 *ppp*

Perc. 2 *p* *mp*

Perc. 3



Resolute ♩ = 126


26 

Perc. 1 *mf* *ff*

Perc. 2 *mf* *ff* *mp*

Perc. 3 *mf* *ff* *mp*

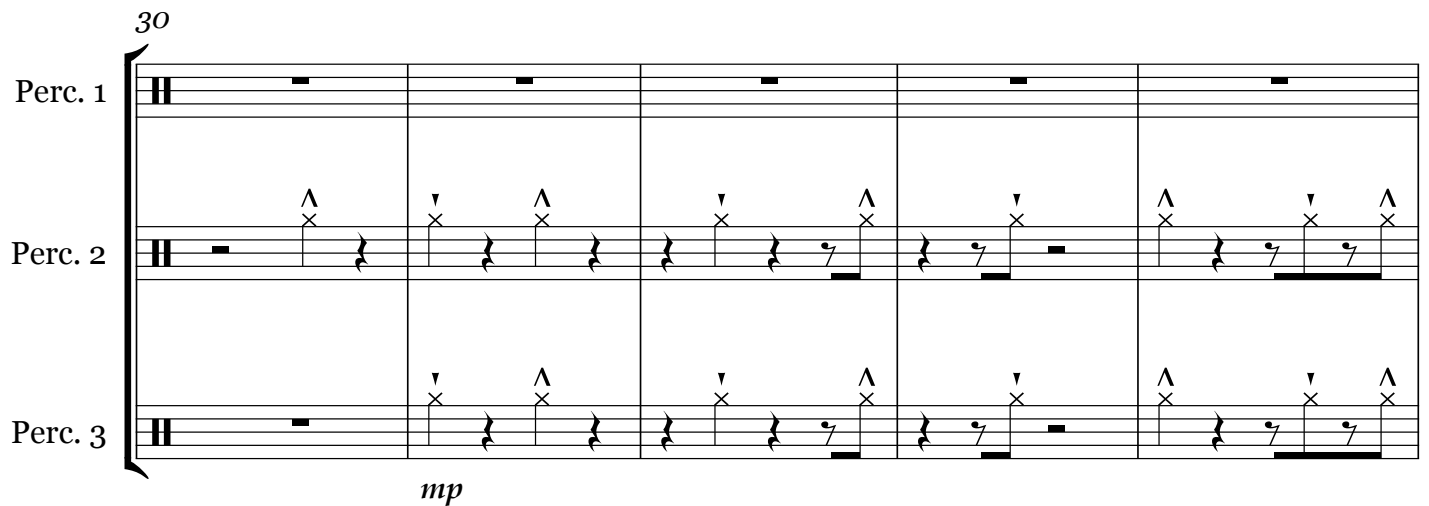


30 

Perc. 1

Perc. 2

Perc. 3 *mp*



Perc. 1

mp

Perc. 2

Perc. 3

40

Perc. 1

mf

Perc. 2

<mf

Perc. 3

mf

44

Perc. 1

Perc. 2

Perc. 3

48 Perc. 1 Perc. 2 Perc. 3

This system of music covers measures 48 to 51. It features three staves: Perc. 1 (top), Perc. 2 (middle), and Perc. 3 (bottom). Perc. 1 starts with a half note followed by quarter notes and eighth notes. Perc. 2 has a half note followed by quarter notes and eighth notes. Perc. 3 has a half note followed by quarter notes and eighth notes. The notation includes various rhythmic values, rests, and dynamic markings such as accents (^) and breath marks (x).

52 Perc. 1 Perc. 2 Perc. 3

This system of music covers measures 52 to 55. It features three staves: Perc. 1 (top), Perc. 2 (middle), and Perc. 3 (bottom). Perc. 1 starts with a half note followed by quarter notes and eighth notes. Perc. 2 has a half note followed by quarter notes and eighth notes. Perc. 3 has a half note followed by quarter notes and eighth notes. The notation includes various rhythmic values, rests, and dynamic markings such as accents (^) and breath marks (x).

56 Perc. 1 Perc. 2 Perc. 3

This system of music covers measures 56 to 59. It features three staves: Perc. 1 (top), Perc. 2 (middle), and Perc. 3 (bottom). Perc. 1 starts with a half note followed by quarter notes and eighth notes. Perc. 2 has a half note followed by quarter notes and eighth notes. Perc. 3 has a half note followed by quarter notes and eighth notes. The notation includes various rhythmic values, rests, and dynamic markings such as accents (^) and breath marks (x).

61

60

Perc. 1

Perc. 2

Perc. 3

f

f

f

Detailed description: This system contains measures 60 through 63. Percussion 1 (Perc. 1) is marked with a dynamic of *f* starting in measure 61. Percussion 2 (Perc. 2) and Percussion 3 (Perc. 3) are also marked with a dynamic of *f* starting in measure 61. The notation includes various rhythmic patterns with accents and dynamic markings.

64

Perc. 1

Perc. 2

Perc. 3

ff

mp

ff

mp

ff

mp

Detailed description: This system contains measures 64 through 67. Percussion 1 (Perc. 1) has dynamics of *ff* in measure 65 and *mp* in measure 67. Percussion 2 (Perc. 2) has dynamics of *ff* in measure 65 and *mp* in measure 67. Percussion 3 (Perc. 3) has dynamics of *ff* in measure 65 and *mp* in measure 67. The notation includes various rhythmic patterns with accents and dynamic markings.

68

Perc. 1

Perc. 2

Perc. 3

Detailed description: This system contains measures 68 through 71. The notation includes various rhythmic patterns with accents and dynamic markings. No explicit dynamics are marked in this system.

72

Perc. 1

Perc. 2

Perc. 3

f

76

Perc. 1

Perc. 2

Perc. 3

mp

f

83

80

Perc. 1

Perc. 2

Perc. 3

ff

84

Perc. 1

Perc. 2

Perc. 3

mf *p*

mf *p*

mf *p*

89

Perc. 1

Perc. 2

Perc. 3

94

97

Perc. 1

Perc. 2

Perc. 3

mp

mp

mp

99

Perc. 1

Perc. 2

Perc. 3

mf

103

Perc. 1

Perc. 2

Perc. 3

ff

desk bell continues to be muted by hand until bar 113

106

Perc. 1

Perc. 2

Perc. 3

p

pp

p

110

Perc. 1

Perc. 2

Perc. 3

push desk bell off front edge of plate

pick up second stick

ff

pp

113 Intense, Focused

Desk bells and bell plates ring freely

Perc. 1

Perc. 2

Perc. 3

pp

Desk bells and bell plates ring freely

pp

Desk bells and bell plates ring freely

pp

115

Perc. 1

Perc. 2

Perc. 3

117

Perc. 1

Perc. 2

Perc. 3

119

Perc. 1

Perc. 2

Perc. 3

121 Aggressive, Violent

Perc. 1

Perc. 2

Perc. 3

ff

ff

ff

125

Perc. 1

Perc. 2

Perc. 3

128

Perc. 1

Perc. 2

Perc. 3

131

Perc. 1

Perc. 2

Perc. 3

133

Perc. 1

Perc. 2

Perc. 3

fff

f

L.V.