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Solo Suite four 4 Timpani

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Solo Suite for 4 Timpani

Michael Shun

About the Piece:

This suite explores the rhythmic and melodic possibilities of the timpani. Despite being devised into three movements, the suite has been designed to be played without breaks in between movements.

The first movement is a theme and variations on an originally composed march theme. The slow and grand introduction slowly incorporates gestures to usher in the metric modulation to the march tempo. The variations explore inverting the theme, accelerating the rhythmic activity with sixteenth note triplets, and emphasizing the intervallic content by rolling on two drums simultaneously. Towards the end of the movement the theme is transformed with a gradual acceleration and deconstruction of the pitch content as the performer must gradually lower the pitch of each of the drums while the theme is played.

Inspired by the *Adagio* of Elliot Carter's "Eight Pieces for Four Timpani", the second movement is the transitional segment to set up the tuning scheme for the third movement. The *glissandi* create the melodic contour as each drum slowly approaches its target pitch. The thunderous climax is an aleatoric section that also revisits the previous movement's idea of rolling on two drums to create vertical sonorities.

The third movement has its inspirations in dance rhythms of Indian *kathak*. The overall shape of the piece is a large crescendo that slowly develops into the dance rhythm in its full form (7+9, or 2+2+3+2+3+2+2), immediately followed by a deconstruction of the material that features little "solos" on each drum.

Special thanks goes to composition mentor Professor Matthew Jaskot and percussion instructor Jonathan Hess for their respective insights in composition and performance.

Performance Notes:

Like in Carter's timpani pieces, (N) stands for playing on the normal playing zones of the timpani, (R) for near the rim/bearing edge, and (C) for the center.

The triangle noteheads indicate indeterminate pitch. Triangles pointed down indicate playing the drum's lowest possible pitch, while triangles pointed up indicate its highest. These will vary across timpani sets.

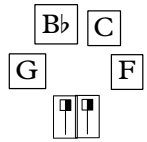
Movement two should feel as though it is in free time, and noteheads in parentheses need not be accurate; the general contour should be the priority of each line.

Performance time c. 15 minutes

Solo Suite for 4 Timpani

I. Theme and Variations

Michael Shun



"general" mallets

Maestoso ♩ = 78

Timpani

(N)

ff *marcato* *mp*

Musical notation for measures 1-9. The key signature has one flat (Bb) and the time signature is 3/4. The notation includes various note values, rests, and dynamic markings. A fermata is placed over the final note of measure 9.

10

(C) (N)

ff

Musical notation for measures 10-19. The notation includes various note values, rests, and dynamic markings. A fermata is placed over the final note of measure 19.

20

(C)

f (C) [stems up]

pp *pp* (R) [stems down]

Musical notation for measures 20-27. The notation includes various note values, rests, and dynamic markings. A fermata is placed over the final note of measure 27.

28

(N) [stems up] stems up *dim.*

stems down *cresc.* (C)----->(N)

mf

Musical notation for measures 28-33. The notation includes various note values, rests, and dynamic markings. A fermata is placed over the final note of measure 33.

34

mf (C)----->(N)

Tempo di Marcia
(♩ = c. 104)

p *f*

Musical notation for measures 34-40. The key signature changes to two flats (Bb and Eb) and the time signature changes to 2/4. The notation includes various note values, rests, and dynamic markings. A fermata is placed over the final note of measure 40.

41

mp

Musical notation for measures 41-48. The notation includes various note values, rests, and dynamic markings. A fermata is placed over the final note of measure 48.

49

f *mp* *mp* *staccato*

Variation I:

Musical notation for measures 49-56. The notation includes various note values, rests, and dynamic markings. A fermata is placed over the final note of measure 56.

57 (R) *p*

65 (N) *f* II: *mf* 3

72 3 3 3 3 3 3

78 6 3 6 6 6 *p*

84 3 3 III: *mp* dolce e cantabile

sfz > *p* *sfz* > *mp*

*Natural decay

92 3 3 *f*

101 (R)-- *p* *fp* *sfz* *p*

111 (N) (C) IV: *Maestoso* (♩=c.78) *ff*

120 (C)→(N) (N)→(R)→(N)

sfz *sfz* *p* *mf* *f*

128

mp

134 (R) (R)

sfz *fp* *sfz*

140 (R)→(N)

sfz *fp* *ff*

147 ^{V:} ♩ = ♩

mp

152 (R) (N)

subito pp *sub.f*

158

mp *f*

164 VI: (♩ = ♩)

mf

170

177

184

* The accelerando should be gradual throughout the variation, but should be played as fast as possible by the new metronome marking.

191

** marcato markings denote pedaling that drum down gradually to its lowest pitch by the end of each phrase.

199

203

II. Intermezzo

Michael Shun

 soft, roller mallets

Largo ♩ = c.40, *freely*

Timpani

(let ring from previous movement at lowest possible pitch)

pp

dampen

mp

(lowest possible pitches)

4

Timpani

strike drum 3, then immediately continue roll on 2 while pedaling 3

(lowest possible pitch)

p

f

sub. p

8

Timpani

ppp

p

13

Timpani

*pedal 3 up to Db

*pedal 2 up to G

sfz

16

Timpani

sim.

sub. mf

rapido

18

Timpani

p

poco a poco crescendo

mf

23 Timp.

tr *molto dim.* *sfz* *sim.*

28 Timp.

p *ad lib. drums 2-4 c. 6"* *mp*

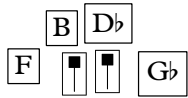
31 Timp.

ad lib. drums 1-3 c. 6" *mf* *ad lib. 2-3 c. 12"* *sffz* *niente*

Gradually end decrescendo rolling on the lowest drum.

III. Kathak-esque

Michael Shun



Vivace $\text{♩} = 130$

Timpani sfz f dampen

4 $(\text{♩} = \text{♩}) (2+3+2+2)$
 Timpani p (C) on F only.

10 (N)

15

20 (N)

25 $<$ $<$ mf

28

32 mp

35
Timp. *sffz* *p*

40
Timp. *p* *sub. mf* *p*

44
Timp. *sub. mf* *p* *sub. mf* *sim.*

48
Timp.

52
Timp.

56
Timp. *mf* *accel.*

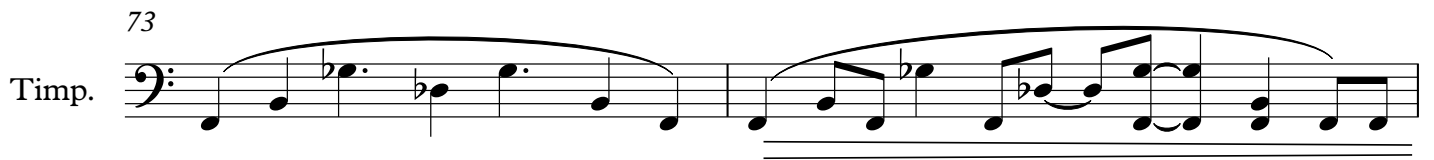
59
Timp.

62
Timp. *f*

64
Timp. *mp* *a tempo*
♩ = 130

67
Timp.

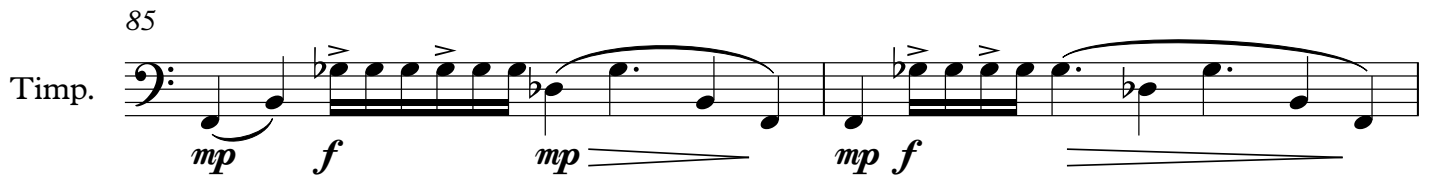
70
Timp. 

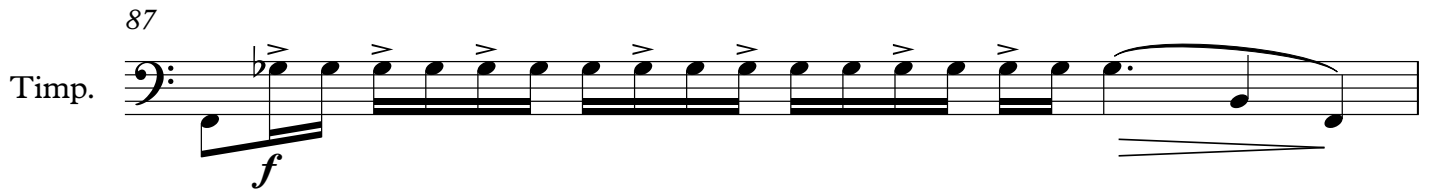
73
Timp. 

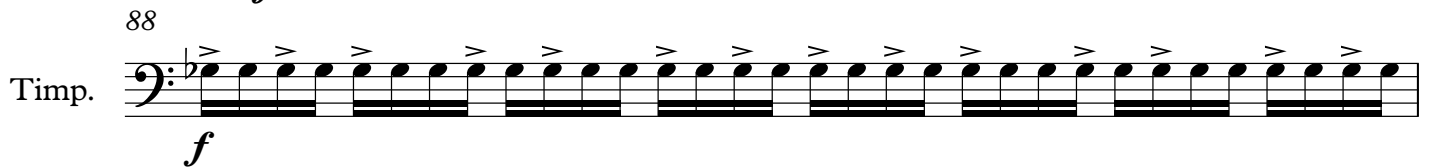
75
Timp. 

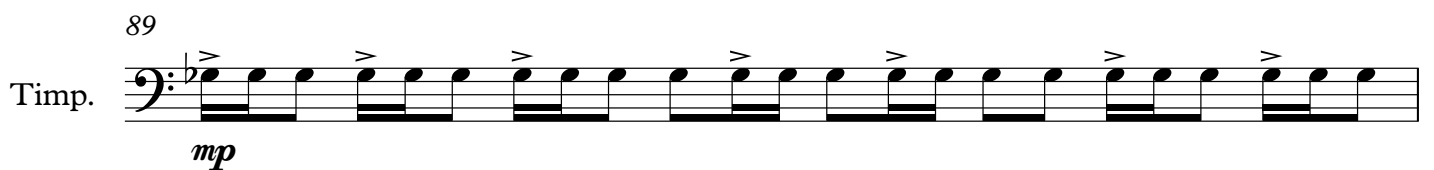
79
Timp. 

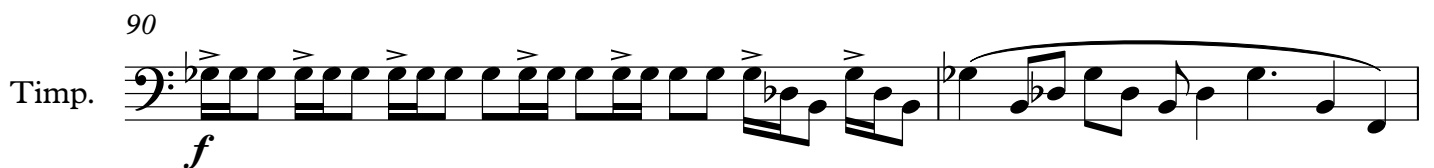
82
Timp. 



85
Timp. 

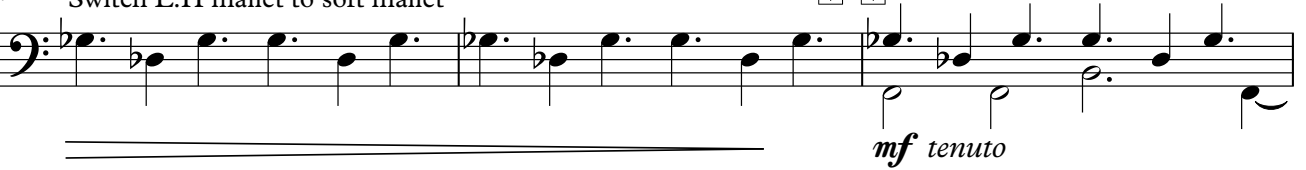
87
Timp. 

88
Timp. 

89
Timp. 

90
Timp. 



92 Switch L.H mallet to soft mallet   *p staccato*

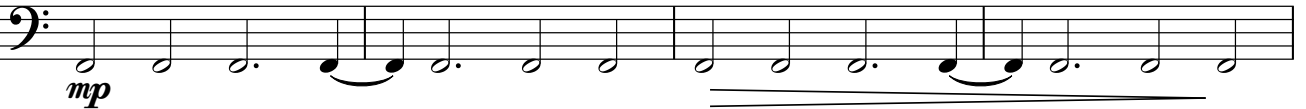
Timp. 

mf tenuto

95

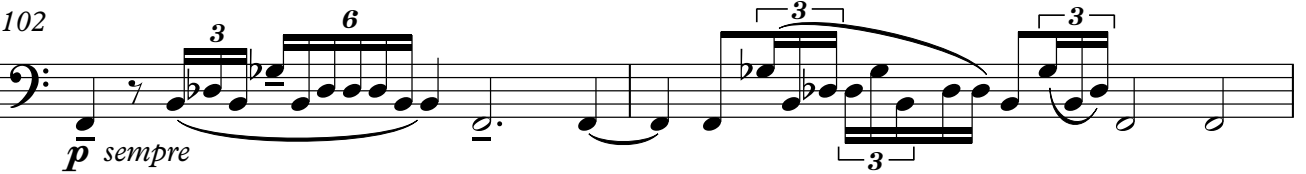
Timp. 

98 R.H. mallet to soft mallet  

Timp. 

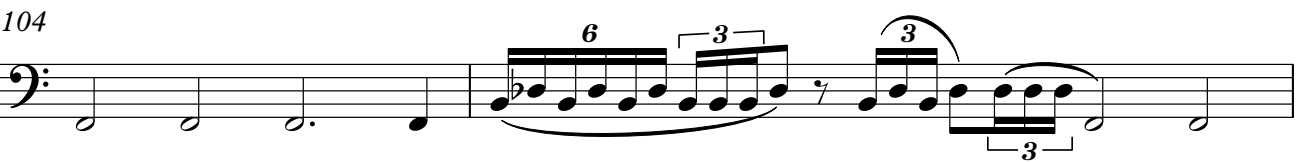
mp

102


Timp. 

p sempre



104

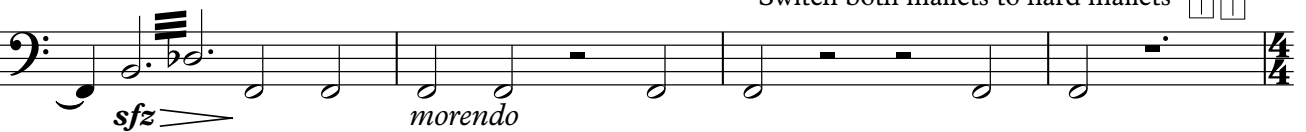
Timp. 

106

Timp. 

sfz

109 Switch both mallets to hard mallets  

Timp. 

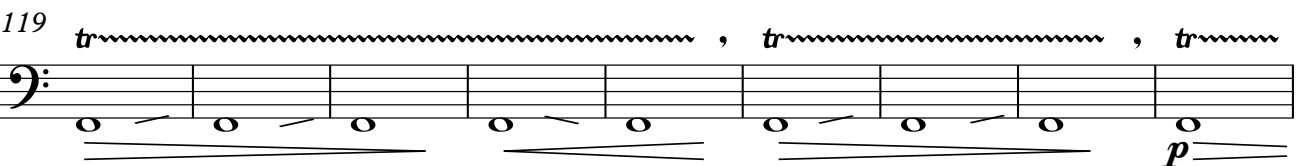
sfz *morendo*

113

Timp. 

pp *mf*

119

Timp. 

p

gradually pedal to higher indeterminate pitch for three bars.

pedal lower for two bars, but no lower than F.

pedal up, as before.

128 (tr) ~~~~~ ,

Timp.  **ppp** highest possible pitch. *poco a poco rit.* **fff**

136 **molto rit.** **a tempo** ♩=130

Timp.  *grad. return to F.* **pp** **sffz**

139  **f** **mf**

142 

144  **ff** ^

(05/16/17)