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notes on progression

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notes on progression for percussion quartet

notes on progression (2017), for four thundersheets, is part of my continued exploration of the relationship between gesture, notation, and sound, notes on progression explores how one gesture may transform into another and how resonance expands beyond its original source and its original container. The ensemble is instructed to perform specific gestures on the surface of each thundersheet, but they may divide up the gestures between the ensemble as they see fit.

Written for Los Angeles Percussion Quartet

by Warren Enström

Performance Notes

Instruments and Supplies Needed

Performers each need:

- One thundersheet (or similarly large, flat piece of pliable metal)
- One stopwatch
- Three thimbles (metal preferred)
- One block of wood

notes on progression, written for Los Angeles Percussion Quartet, consists of four performers tapping, striking, rubbing, and bending four thundersheets. Each thundersheet should be a different size, to get a maximum variety of sonic potential.

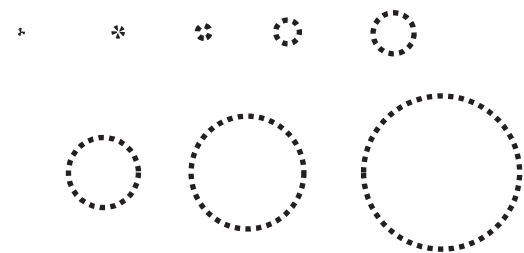
Page five of this document contains the full score. The score consists of graphic notations indicating which gestures are to be performed. See "Score Key," p. 2, for further information on the symbols that appear within it. Each player reads from the full score, using the symbols that appear on it to direct what gestures to perform on the surface of the instrument.

Players are to memorize the gesture that each symbol within the full score refers to. These gestures are listed with the corresponding symbol using gesture notation on page four. See "Gesture Key," p. 3 for more info on how to read the gesture notation.

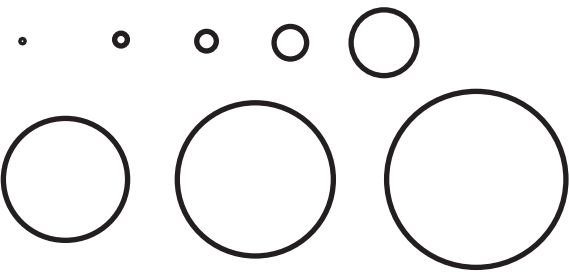
The piece is controlled by stopwatch time. All performers will start their stopwatches at the same time and progress throughout the piece together. Though each player is reading the same part, the ensemble should work together to realize the score, coordinating who will perform large gestures when and how. The piece is quite open in this regard -- every player could perform every gesture, or the ensemble could distribute the gestures amongs the performers to shape the contour of the piece.

The ensemble should feel free to experiment with gesture placement on the surface of the instrument. All gestures will create differently-resonating sounds when performed on different parts of the instruments, so really get to know your instrument and feel how it responds to being touched!

Score Key



These symbols indicate gestures on the tapping/striking trajectory. Smallest circles with dotted borders indicate tapping with bare fingers on the thundersheet, using each finger as an individual tapping agent. Largest circles with dotted borders indicate striking the thundersheet with bare fingers forcefully, using the whole hand as one unit.



These symbols indicate gestures on the tapping/striking trajectory. Smallest circles with solid borders indicate tapping on the thundersheet with thimbled fingers, using each finger as an individual tapping agent. Largest circles with solid borders indicate striking the thundersheet with thimbled fingers forcefully, using the whole hand as one unit.



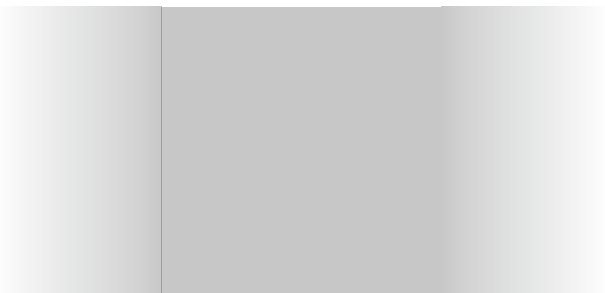
These symbols indicate gestures on the rubbing trajectory. Dashed, straight lines indicate rubbing the thundersheet with bare fingers, moving in one direction only. This straight line gesture will bend and become a circular rubbing gesture. The circular rubbing gesture will then thin out into a back-and-forth rubbing gesture in a straight line. On the left, this trajectory is shown as each step in the process appears in the full score.



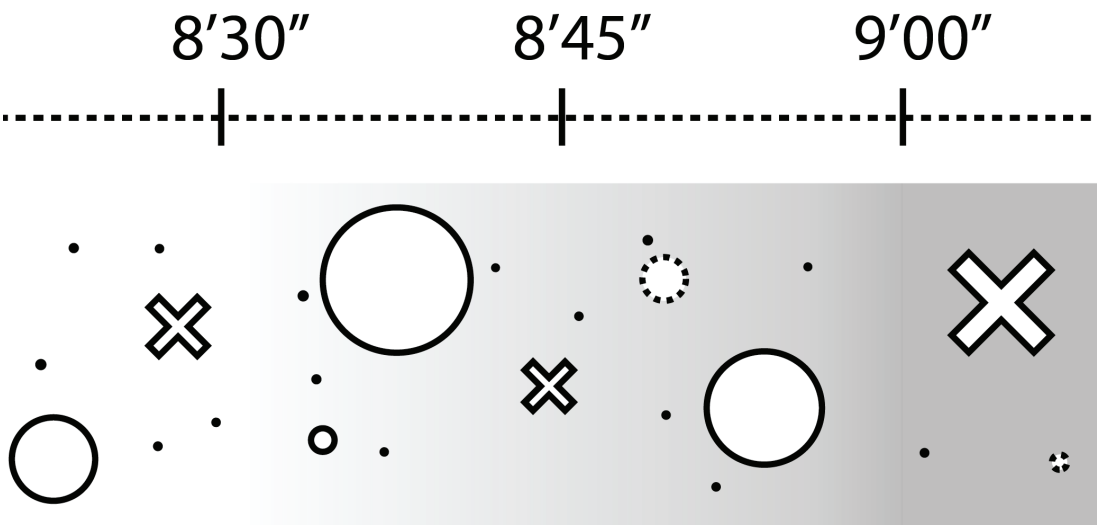
These symbols indicate gestures on the rubbing trajectory. Dashed, straight lines indicate rubbing the thundersheet with bare fingers, moving in one direction only. This straight line gesture will bend and become a circular rubbing gesture. The circular rubbing gesture will then thin out into a back-and-forth rubbing gesture in a straight line. On the left, this trajectory is shown as each step in the process appears in the full score.



This symbol indicates hitting the side of the thundersheet with a wooden block. Size of the symbol indicates force of the hit, with larger symbols being more forceful.



Gray regions of the full score indicate that the thundersheet is to be bent, with the dark gray areas being bent as fully as possible, and with the gradient indicating varying stages of bending.



Excerpt from the full score. Note the timeline at the top. An example performance of this excerpt might begin with a medium-intensity thimbled-finger strike, followed by sparse thimbled-finger tapping. This will then be interrupted with a side-hit of the thundersheet with a wooden block, before a much larger thimbled-finger strike is played. After this strike, a few sparse thimble taps will be followed with a quiet side-hit, with a quiet bare-finger strike, and so on. Note that when a section appears with the "bend" gradient, all performers are required to bend their thundersheets.

Gestural Key



Outlined triangles with a vertical line through the center indicate the instrument is to be struck forcefully with thimbled fingers.



Filled triangles with a horizontal line through the center indicate the instrument is to be tapped upon with thimbled fingers.



Filled triangles without any lines indicate thimbled fingers are to be placed on the surface of the instrument and left there.



Outlined circles with a vertical line through the center indicate the instrument is to be struck forcefully with bare fingers.



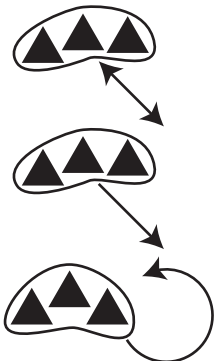
Filled circles with horizontal lines indicate the instrument is to be tapped upon with bare fingers.



Filled circles without any lines indicate the bare fingers are to be placed on the surface of the instrument and left there.



Symbols enclosed in a boundary are to be performed as one unit (moving the whole hand, as opposed to individual fingers).



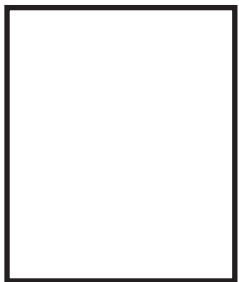
Straight arrows and circular arrows indicate directed motion over the surface of the instrument. Double-headed arrows move in both directions while single headed arrows only move in the direction of the arrowhead.



The curved arrow indicates that a thundersheet is to be bent.



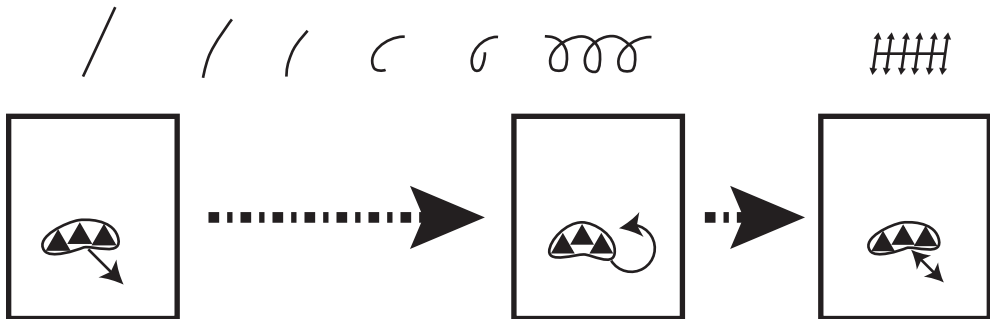
The outlined x indicates that the thundersheet is to be hit with a wooden block.



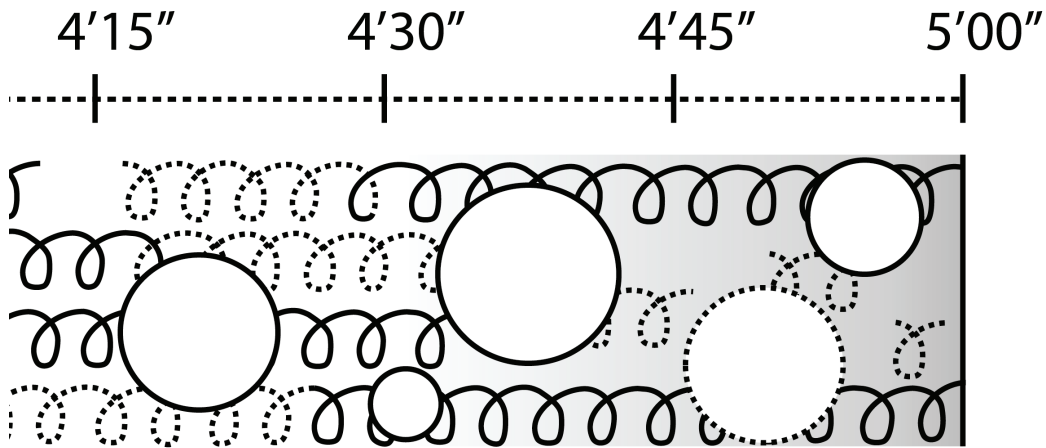
The large rectangle represents the surface of the thundersheet.



The dashed arrow indicates a transition between gestures (see right for a full explanation).

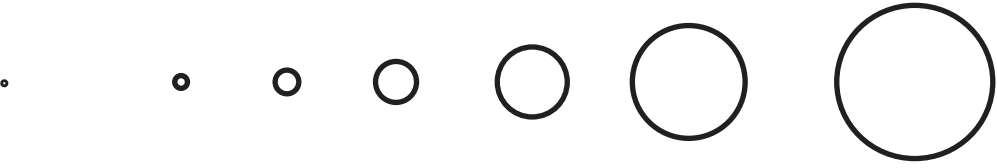
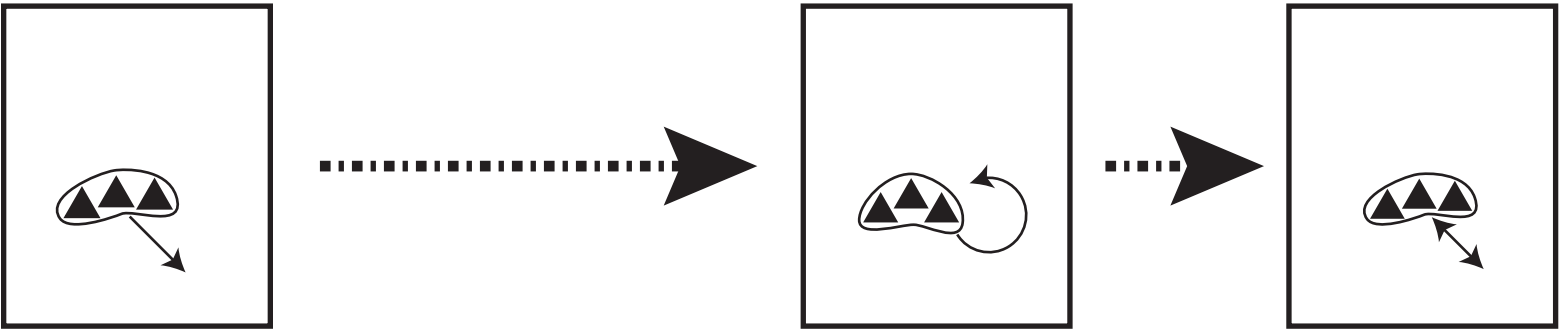
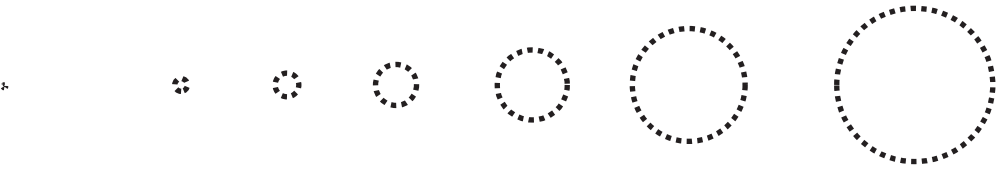
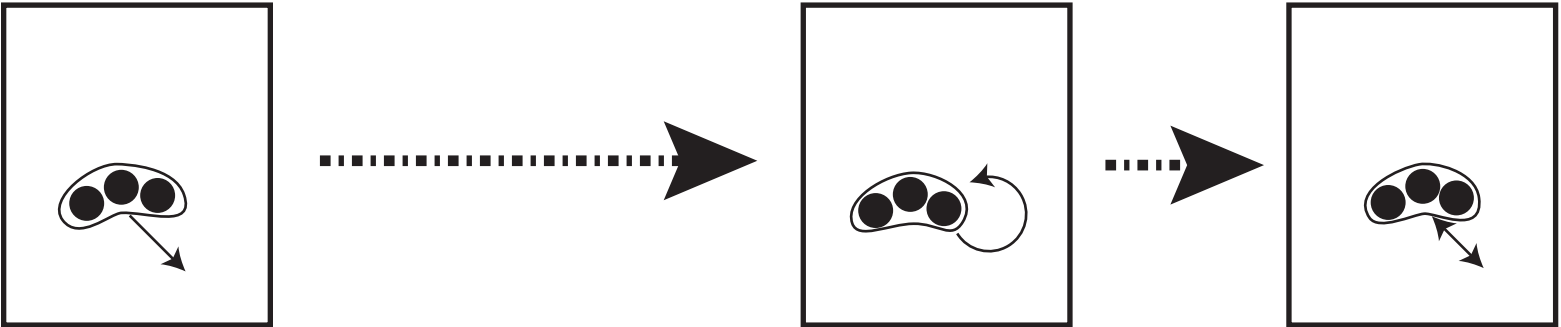
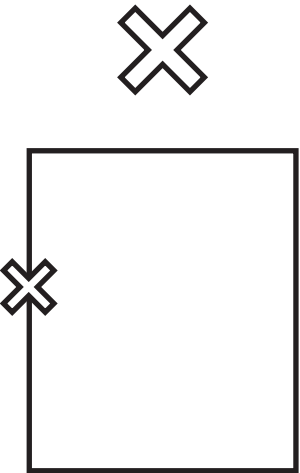
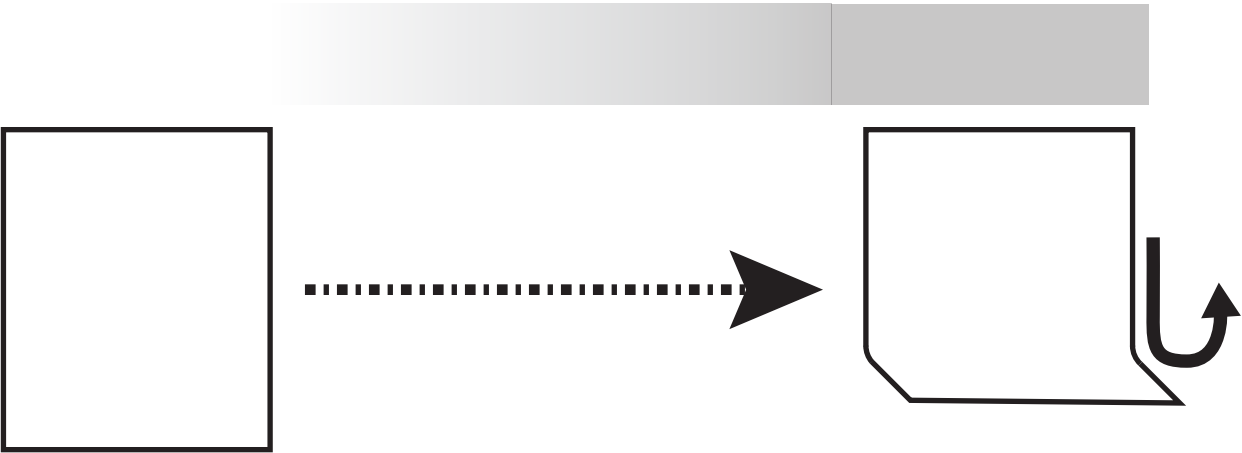


Sample from gestural key. The symbols above each thundersheet pictogram indicate the textural notations from the full score that the pictogram corresponds to. Dashed arrows between thundersheet pictograms indicate a morphing from one gesture to the following. Above, this might appear like a straight line being traced in one direction on the surface of the thundersheet, eventually evolving into a more and more circular one-way arc. Then, the arc gets thinner and thinner until the performer is rubbing a line back and forth on the surface of the thundersheet. Each of these changes is encoded using symbols, which appear above the gestural notation diagrams.



In the full score, multiple textures may appear at the same time. These corresponding gestures may be performed by every member of the ensemble, selectively by certain members of the ensemble, or by a mixture of the two, so long as each texture is represented. For example, performers 1 and 3 might play the strikes, while performer 2 does the thimbled-finger rubbing, while performer 4 does the bare-finger rubbing. Alternatively, all performers could do a mixture of bare- and thimbled-finger rubbing, punctuating the texture with strikes according to the timeline.

Gestural Key (cont)



Full
Score

