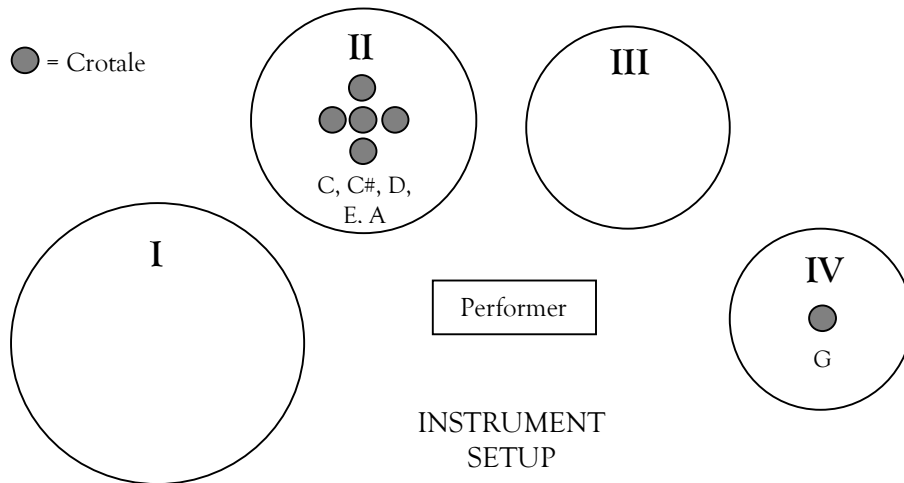


RHOMBUS

Tony Oliver

THE GENERAL IDEA: This piece makes use of sympathetic-resonance effects. Sympathetic resonances of the timpani (or “amplification” of the crotales, depending on how you look at it), occur when the pitches of the timpani are made to match those of the crotales (or of their overtones) that rest on them. The timpani then act as resonators for the crotales and an eerie kind of “singing” effect occurs. This effect is used in two ways in this piece: 1) By raising and lowering the pitch on the resonating drum, a type of “vibrato” or pulsing occurs as the sympathetic resonance phases in and out. (See the beginning and similar sections.) 2) By slowly raising the pitch of the resonating drum, the crotale pitches will become more resonant and “sing.” (See 1 before A, 6 and 12 of letter A, and letter F.) Mallets, dynamics, tempos, and the performance environment (a quiet space works best) should maximize the audience’s ability to hear these effects. Some suggestions and instructions follow below.

INSTRUMENTS and SETUP: This piece is written for a standard set of four timpani (32”=I, 29”=II, 26”=III, 23”=IV) and 6 crotales (C, C#, D, E, G, A—all from the same octave). The crotales should be placed on the timpani heads with the bells DOWN, leaving the crotales able to ring as freely as possible when played. In your performance setting, depending on the acoustics of the performance environment and the instruments available, you might find slightly different placements desirable. Choose a placement that allows for the maximum “singing” effect.



MALLETS: Timpani mallets should be used on the timpani, and very hard unwrapped mallets used on the crotales (e.g., those used on bells, xylophone, etc.). It is left to the performer to choose mallets that allow for maximum resonance and sustain, as this is of primary importance in the piece.

TEMPO: Tempos in the *Senza Misura* sections should be slow and free. The only considerations (apart from artistic ones) are how long your instruments sustain. The tempos should never be so slow that the various instruments stop ringing too soon. There should be a great deal of overlapping sound. In the measured sections, adherence to the rhythmic relationships should be observed. Only the speed of the creation of the resonance effects is free in these sections.

PERFORMANCE INSTRUCTIONS BASED ON NOTATION:

Let all crotale notes ring as long as possible.

Notes with 'x' heads are NOT struck. They indicate the start of the resonance effect. The arrows indicate the general nature of the pedal/pitch movement, not specific pitches. Always start with the drum at its lowest pitch. For the “vibrato” effect, raise and lower the pitch again and again. The speed and number of pedal movements is loosely indicated. Adjust for your own tastes and circumstances. At 1 before A, 6 and 12 of A, and at Letter F, the pitch should be raised slowly, allowing the crotales to gradually start to “sing.” In letter A, this can take more measures than indicated. Feel free to take your time.

[5 after A]

CROTALES (C,C#,D,E,G,A)

Senza Misura, Freely

f

TIMPANI

mf

I

II

Indicates the drum to be used.

Let timpani notes ring as long as possible in free sections.

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Let us hear about your performance! Please send performance information to:

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