

Fall River: at the edge of the void

Theme and Variations for Percussion Ensemble

-DOUGLAS MCCAUSLAND-

Program Note:

First completed in the late Fall of 2012, *Fall River: at the edge of the void* is essentially a theme and variations for percussion ensemble. Following its early performances, the piece lay 'dormant' for some time until in late 2015 when I had the opportunity to work closely with the percussion studio from Michigan State University on a new interpretation of the work for a series of performances and recording. However, instead of simply printing another copy of the score and parts, I elected to revise the piece quite extensively while still honoring the original vision. The result of this revision yielded a more focused and sonically playful piece in which I applied much of my thoughts and processes about electroacoustic composition to the acoustic medium.

The title of this piece is a direct reference to the remote state park of Fall River, Kansas. While in Fall River, I had my first opportunity to witness a truly spectacular view of the night sky almost completely unobstructed by nearby city lights. As I drove farther and farther into the countryside, the sky seemed to open up into a stunning pointillistic display. Soon after, the primary theme along with the idea of playing the open piano strings as a 'hammered dulcimer' came to me, and caused the musical ideas to seem linked in a way to Fall River and the experience itself. Generally, the piece is active and has a lot of forward momentum with a large focus on the overall timbre, the spectral voicing of the ensemble, and on the twisting interplay of rhythms accented in groups of two or three. The 'theme' of the piece is at its core more of a motive of four notes stacked in perfect fifths; and the different variations expand on this melodically, harmonically, and timbrally. As a final note, though I don't consider the piece to be in the key of E, or even to be functionally tonal, an E is held in some capacity throughout the entire piece; whether its being held by a wine glass, marimba, or open piano strings, it's always present.

Performance Note:

Though "Fall River: At the Edge of the Void" is scored as a septet, it may be helpful to add an eighth "auxiliary" player. This may alleviate some of the difficulties associated with the piano part in particular, such as switching between playing inside with mallets to playing the piano normally. Additionally, all indications of mallet choice, pedaling, and so on, are suggestions; discretion is given to the performers to choose mallets appropriately for performance needs (space, instrument, etc). The sonic landscape of the piece should be somewhat of a wash (pedaled vibraphone, piano, bowed cymbals that are un-dampened, etc.) but the piece should still have a strong rhythmic center. As such, feel free to make small alterations to these aspects of the piece as needed to suit the performance space or balance of the ensemble.

Instrumentation:

Piano (played both normally, and with mallets inside)
2 Marimbas
Vibraphone (w/ fan)
Chimes

Percussion One: (will need appropriate sticks/mallets and a bow)
Hi-hat Cymbal
2 Ride Cymbals
2 Crash Cymbals
China Cymbal
Finger Cymbals
Tam-Tam
Wine Glass (w/ water tuned to an E)
Percussion Two: (will need appropriate sticks/mallets and brushes)
Snare Drum
2 Floor Toms
Bass Drum
China Cymba

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FALL RIVER: AT THE EDGE OF THE VOID

Theme and Variations for Percussion Ensemble

Douglas McCausland
Rev. 2015

Lively (♩ = 162)

With Drumsticks or Xylophone Mallets on strings Keep Pedal Depressed

Piano

mp
Strike strings with hand
8vb - - - - -

Marimba 1

p *pp* *mp* *pp*²

Marimba 2

mp *n* *mf*

Vibraphone

pp
Pedal as needed,
unless otherwise notated
Ped.

Chimes

Percussion 1

Cymbals to be played with drumsticks Ride C. Tam-tam Hi-hat

p *pp* *mp*

Percussion 2

B.D. Rim China C.

pp *p*

10

Pno. *mf* *n* *n* *pp*

Mrb. 1 *pp* *mp* *p*

Mrb. 2 *pp*

Vib. *p*

Chm.

P. 1 *p* *mp* *p* Ride C. 2 Hi-hat + Tam-tam

P. 2 *p* *mf* *p* S.D. 2 2

Detailed description: This musical score is for a percussion ensemble. It features seven staves: Piano (Pno.), Maracas 1 (Mrb. 1), Maracas 2 (Mrb. 2), Vibraphone (Vib.), Chimes (Chm.), Snare Drum 1 (P. 1), and Snare Drum 2 (P. 2). The key signature is three sharps (F#, C#, G#) and the time signature is 7/8. The score begins at measure 10. The Piano part has a melodic line in the right hand with dynamics *mf*, *n* (noisy), and *pp*. The Maracas and Vibraphone parts have rhythmic patterns with dynamics *pp*, *mp*, and *p*. The Snare Drums have specific patterns: P. 1 includes 'Ride C.', 'Hi-hat', and 'Tam-tam' with dynamics *p*, *mp*, and *p*; P. 2 includes 'S.D.' and '2' with dynamics *p*, *mf*, and *p*. The Chimes part is mostly silent.

5

The musical score for 'A' is a 12-measure piece in 4/4 time, marked with a tempo of 19. The score is written for seven instruments: Piano (Pno.), Maracas 1 (Mrb. 1), Maracas 2 (Mrb. 2), Vibraphone (Vib.), Chimes (Chm.), Percussion 1 (P. 1), and Percussion 2 (P. 2). The key signature is three sharps (F#, C#, G#). The score is divided into two systems of six measures each. The first system (measures 1-6) features a complex rhythmic pattern in the piano and maracas, with the vibraphone and chimes providing harmonic support. The second system (measures 7-12) continues the rhythmic development, with the percussion instruments playing a more active role. The score includes various dynamic markings such as *p*, *mp*, and *pp*, and articulation marks like accents and slurs. The percussion parts are specifically labeled with 'Ride C.', 'Hi-hat', 'China C.', 'Tam-tam', and 'Fl. Tom 2'.

B

38

Pno.

Mrb. 1

Mrb. 2

Vib.

Chm.

P. 1

P. 2

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

f *mf* *f* *f* *f* *Crash C.*

f *mf* *f*

47

Pno.

Mrb. 1

Mrb. 2

Vib.

Chm.

P. 1

P. 2

f *mf* *mp* *n*

f *mp* *f*

f

China C. Finger C.

B.D. Fl. Toms

C

Pno. *piano, ord.* *mf* *With forearm* *8vb*

Mrb. 1 *p*

Mrb. 2 *mf* *mf*

Vib. *p*

Chm. *p*

P. 1 *Tam-tam* *mp* *f*

P. 2 *f* *mf* *f*

64

Pno.

8vb

Mrb. 1

Mrb. 2

mf

p

subito p

Vib.

p

Chm.

P. 1

Hi-hat

Tam-tam

mf

mp

P. 2

B.D.

f

Fl. Toms

mf <

73

Pno.

8vb

mp

8vb

Mrb. 1

Mrb. 2

mf *n* *mf* *n* *f* *n* *mf*

Vib.

n *mf* *n* *f*

Chm.

P. 1

China C.

P. 2

f *n* *pp* *p* *mp*

82

Pno.

82

Mrb. 1

82

Mrb. 2

82

Vib.

82

Chm.

82

P. 1

82

P. 2

Fl. Tom 1

China C.

pp

f

n

mf

mp

8va

Pno.

91

p *mp* *mf* *f*

Mrb. 1

91

n *n* *f*

Mrb. 2

91

f *n* *n* *f*

Vib.

91

f *n* *n* *f*

Chm.

91

P. 1

91

Crash C. Crash C. 2

mf *f* *ff*

P. 2

91

f *ff*

B.D.

99 *ff* *G.P.* **D** Breaking Away (♩ = 105)

Pno.

Mrb. 1

Mrb. 2 *mf*

Vib. *p*

Chm.

P. 1 *China & Crash C.* *Ride C.* *China/Tam-tam*

P. 2 *Fl. Tom 1 & BD* *Fl. Tom 2*

Let Ring

Lea

E Contemplative (♩ = 66)

106

Pno. *mp*

Slide LH across strings

8^{va}

Mrb. 1

Mrb. 2 *pp* 3 3 *n*

Vib. *mf* Let Ring Turn on vibrato *mp*

Chm. Play with cloth covered mallets *pp*

P. 1 *p* (Bowed) Start Wine Glass (Tuned to E)

P. 2

115 *8va*

Pno.

Slide LH across strings

Slide LH across strings

Slide LH across strings

8vb

Mrb. 1

115

Mrb. 2

115

Vib.

Reo.

Reo.

Reo.

Reo.

Chm.

115

P. 1

115

P. 2

115

Fall River: at the Edge of the Void

19

Musical score for measures 121-126. The score includes parts for Piano (Pno.), Maracas 1 (Mrb. 1), Maracas 2 (Mrb. 2), Vibraphone (Vib.), Chimes (Chm.), and Percussion 1 (P. 1) and Percussion 2 (P. 2). The key signature is three sharps (F#, C#, G#). The tempo is marked 'Andante' (And.).

Measure 121: Pno. (Treble clef) plays a melodic line starting on G#4, marked *mp*. Mrb. 1 and Mrb. 2 are silent. Vib. (Treble clef) plays a melodic line starting on G#4, marked *mf*. Chm. (Treble clef) plays a melodic line starting on G#4, marked *p*. P. 1 and P. 2 are silent.

Measure 122: Pno. continues the melodic line. Mrb. 1 and Mrb. 2 are silent. Vib. continues the melodic line. Chm. continues the melodic line. P. 1 and P. 2 are silent.

Measure 123: Pno. continues the melodic line. Mrb. 1 and Mrb. 2 are silent. Vib. continues the melodic line. Chm. continues the melodic line. P. 1 and P. 2 are silent.

Measure 124: Pno. continues the melodic line. Mrb. 1 and Mrb. 2 are silent. Vib. continues the melodic line. Chm. continues the melodic line. P. 1 and P. 2 are silent.

Measure 125: Pno. continues the melodic line. Mrb. 1 and Mrb. 2 are silent. Vib. continues the melodic line. Chm. continues the melodic line. P. 1 and P. 2 are silent.

Measure 126: Pno. continues the melodic line. Mrb. 1 and Mrb. 2 are silent. Vib. continues the melodic line. Chm. continues the melodic line. P. 1 and P. 2 are silent.

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127

Pno.

rit. **F** (Trem slows into ♩ = 132)

mp *Slide LH across strings*

Mrb. 1

p *mp* *p* *p*

Mrb. 2

p *mp* *p* *pp*

Vib.

mp *p*

Chm.

ord. mallets *pp*

P. 1

127

End Wine Glass

Hi-hat

pp

P. 2

127

132

Pno.

p Slide LH across strings

mp

mf

8va

8vb

Mrb. 1

pp

p

pp

p

pp

Mrb. 2

pp

p

pp

p

pp

Vib.

mf

Chm.

p

P. 1

China C. (Switch to bow) China C. Crash C. 2 Tam-tam Crash C.

mp

P. 2

(Switch to brushes) Fl. Toms B.D.

p

mp

8va

Pno.

Mrb. 1

Mrb. 2

Vib.

Chm.

P. 1

P. 2

139

p *pp* *p* *pp* *p* *pp*

p *pp* *p* *pp* *p* *pp*

f *mf*

mp

(Bowed) Crash C. Crash C. 2 China C.

S.D. Fl. Tom 1 Fl. Tom 2 B.D.

4

Fall River: at the Edge of the Void

23

8^{va}

Pno.

145

mf

mp

Red.

Mrb. 1

p

pp

p

pp

p

pp

Mrb. 2

p

pp

p

pp

p

pp

Vib.

145

Red.

Chm.

145

Red.

P. 1

145

(Switch to drumsticks)

Hi-hat

pp

P. 2

145

3

3

8va

Pno.

151

mf

f

G

Mrb. 1

p

pp

p

mf

Mrb. 2

p

pp

p

mf

Vib.

151

f

Chm.

151

mf

P. 1

151

Hi-hat

China C.

Ride Cymbals

Crash C. 2

mf

P. 2

151

Fl. Toms

B.D.

(Switch to drumsticks)

S.D.

Fl. Tom 1

mf

Fall River: at the Edge of the Void

25

[illegible]

H Returning... ♩ = 128

Pno.

164 *Let Ring*

Return to playing on strings

Mrb. 1

164

pp

Mrb. 2

164

Vib.

164

Freely

Red

Chm.

164 *Let Ring*

subito p

P. 1

164 *Tam-tam*

Slide stick across Tam-tam

(Bowed)

Ride Cymbals

T.T. w/ stick

p

P. 2

164 *B.D.*

In G, play BD with drumstick if needed

SD Rim

Fl. Toms

pp

pp < f

pp

6

6

I

173

Pno.

mp

Strike strings with hand

8vb

Mrb. 1

Mrb. 2

Vib.

Chm.

P. 1

mp

China C.

China & Crash C.

6

P. 2

pp

6

p

mf

B.D. Rim

SD Rim

6

S.D.

3

6

The musical score for "The Day After Tomorrow" is presented in a multi-staff format. The top section includes staves for Piano (Pno.), Maraca 1 (Mrb. 1), Maraca 2 (Mrb. 2), Vibraphone (Vib.), and Chimes (Chm.). The bottom section includes staves for Percussion 1 (P. 1) and Percussion 2 (P. 2). The score is written in 3/4 time, with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The tempo is marked "Moderato". The score begins with a 181-measure rest for the piano, followed by a 2-measure rest for the maracas, and a 3-measure rest for the vibraphone and chimes. The percussion parts enter at measure 181, with the Hi-hat playing a steady eighth-note pattern and the Crash Cymbal playing a series of eighth notes. The Maraca 1 part plays a steady eighth-note pattern, while Maraca 2 plays a series of eighth notes. The Vibraphone and Chimes play a series of eighth notes. The Percussion 1 part plays a series of eighth notes, and the Percussion 2 part plays a series of eighth notes. The score concludes with a final measure of rest for the piano, followed by a 2-measure rest for the maracas, and a 3-measure rest for the vibraphone and chimes.

molto accel.

J As before ♩ = 162

With Drumsticks or Xylophone Mallets on strings

189

Pno.

pp *piano, ord.* *f* *mp* *mf* *mp*

Let Ring

8vb

Mrb. 1

mp *f* *mf* *mp*

Mrb. 2

mp *f* *mf*

Vib.

p *f*

Chm.

p *mf* *mp*

P. 1

subito p *f* *mp*

P. 2

subito p *f* *mp*

B.D. Rim

201

Pno.

Mrb. 1

Mrb. 2

Vib.

Chm.

P. 1

P. 2

China C.

Hi-hat

Fl. Toms

B.D.

S.D.

mf

f

mp

f

mf

p

211

Pno.

211

Mrb. 1

211

Mrb. 2

mf

f

mf

f

ff

8va

Vib.

211

p

Chm.

211

P. 1

f

mf

f

f

f

Crash C.

211

P. 2

f

mf

f

220

Pno.

Mrb. 1

Mrb. 2

Vib.

Chm.

P. 1

P. 2

f *mf* *f* *n*

f *mf* *f*

mp

China C. *Finger C.*

B.D. *Fl. Toms*

f

K

Pno.

piano, ord. **f** *With forearm* *8vb*

Mrb. 1 **p**

Mrb. 2 **mf**

Vib. **p**

Chm. **p**

P. 1 *Tam-tam* **mp** **f** **mf**

P. 2 **f** **mf** **f**

The musical score is for a piece titled "Fall River: at the Edge of the Void", page 33. It features a key signature of three sharps (F#, C#, G#) and a time signature that changes from 3/8 to 2/4. The score includes parts for Piano (Pno.), Mrb. 1, Mrb. 2, Vib., Chm., P. 1 (Tam-tam), and P. 2. The piano part has a series of chords marked "8vb" and "With forearm". The mridangams play a rhythmic pattern. The vibraphone plays sustained chords. The chimes play a melodic line. The tam-tams play a rhythmic pattern. The percussion 2 part has a melodic line with accents.

238

Pno.

8^{vb}

Mrb. 1

238

Mrb. 2

238

Vib.

238

Chm.

238

P. 1

238

P. 2

Hi-hat

Tam-tam

China C.

B.D.

Fl. Toms

p

mf

subito p

f

247

Pno.

247

Mrb. 1

Mrb. 2

Vib.

Chm.

P. 1

P. 2

mf

8vb

n *mf* *n* *f* *n* *mf* *n*

n *mf* *n* *f* *n*

n *pp* *p* *mp*

256

Pno.

256

Mrb. 1

256

Mrb. 2

256

Vib.

256

Chm.

256

P. 1

256

P. 2

Fl. Tom 1

China C.

Crash C.

Crash C. 2

8va

pp

p

f

n

mf

(8va)

Pno.

Mrb. 1

Mrb. 2

Vib.

Chm.

P. 1

P. 2

266

mp *mf* *f*

f

n *f*

n *f*

f *ff*

f *ff* *B.D.*

8va--

Pno.

274

ff

Let Ring

Mrb. 1

274

Mrb. 2

274

Vib.

274

Let Ring

Freely

Turn off vibrato, fade...

Chm.

274

Let Ring

P. 1

274

China & Crash C.

Ride C.

China/Tam-tam

Let Ring

P. 2

274

Fl. Tom 1 & BD

Fl. Tom 2