Ex Nihilo

Kris Peysen

Program Notes

Ex Nihilo is a Latin phrase meaning “out of nothing” or “from nothing.” Its most common use occurs in theology with the phrase *creatio ex nihilo,* which means “creation from nothing.”

In classical philosophy, *ex nihilo* also appears in the phrase *ex nihilo nihil fit,* which means “out of nothing comes nothing.”

In mathematics, a solution to a problem can be called *ex nihilo* if it appears without a working.

In military organization, a unit is *ex nihilo* if it forms without significant members of other units.

In computer programming, a created object is called *ex nihilo* if it does not use another object as its prototype.

My piece explores all these meanings.

Structurally, the piece is in a rough arch form, with the center section acting as a sort of fulcrum upon which the piece undergoes several transformations. Harmonically, the piece is a mixture of octatonic, chromatic, and diatonic elements, all freely juxtaposed with one another. Another notable element of the piece is the use of polymeter, which occurs in multiple episodes throughout, achieving its highest complexity in the climax.

This piece explores the creation and evolution of musical materials and everything that can happen in between. In those spaces lie vast potential.

Performance Notes

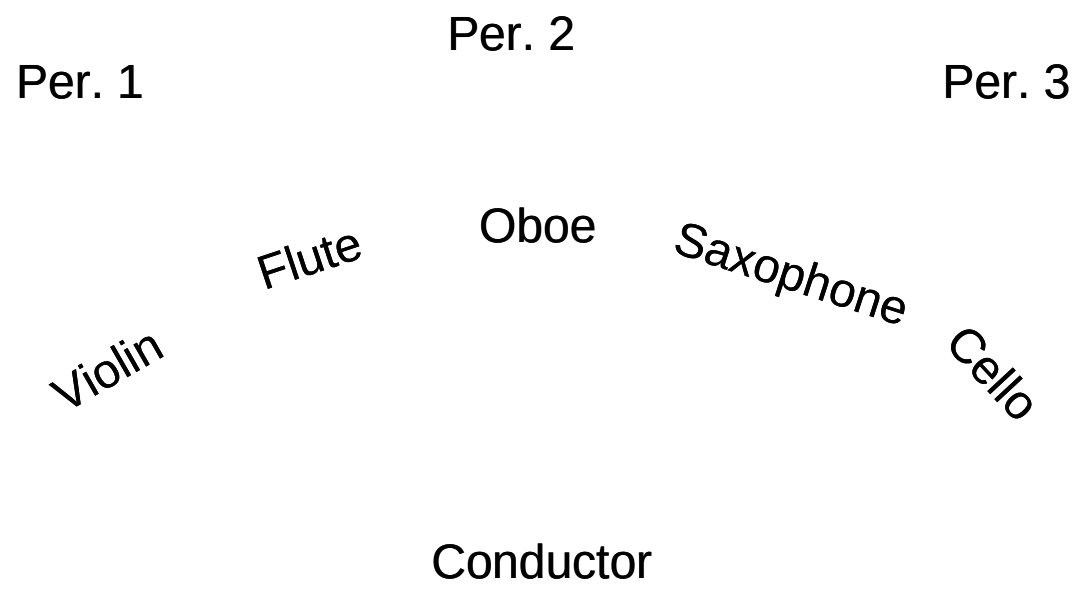
Duration: 15’00”

Instrumentation

Flute/Piccolo
Oboe
Tenor Saxophone in Bb*
Violin
Cello
Percussionist 1
Percussionist 2
Percussionist 3

*The saxophone player is required to perform both classical and jazz style during the piece, as notated in the score. The terms I am using here refer mainly to the type of sound produced by the instrument, and not to any further method of playing or “interpretation” of the music—i.e. rhythms in the jazz section should be played as written and not be “swung” in any fashion. In order to clarify what sounds I want, the classical sound should be darker, mellower, and with less vibrato; while the jazz sound should be brighter, more “growly,” raucous, and use a heavier amount of vibrato. Time has been allotted to change mouthpieces if the player so desires.

Stage Layout



Notational Clarifications

Feathered Beams mean to repeat the given note or pattern, starting at the initial note value (in this case an eighth note) and accelerate to the speed of an unmeasured tremolo. The beat remains constant.

always means unmeasured tremolo.

n = niente

String glissandi begin immediately on the note they are attached to.

Accidentals behave traditionally, applying throughout the measure.

Percussion Instrumentation

Player 1

Chimes (Chm)
*Glockenspiel (Glsp)
Xylophone (Xyl)
Triangle (Trgl)
*4 Small Gongs (S.G.)
Medium Tam-tam (M. Tam)
Cymbals (Cymb)
Temple Blocks (T. Bl.)

Player 2

*Glockenspiel (Glsp)
Triangle (Trgl)
Cowbell (Cowb)
*4 Small Gongs (S.G.)
Thnder Sheet (Th. S.)
*Large Tam-tam (L. Tam)
Cymbals (Cymb)
Claves (Clv)
5 Wood Blocks (W. Bl.)
2 Log Drums (L. Dr.)

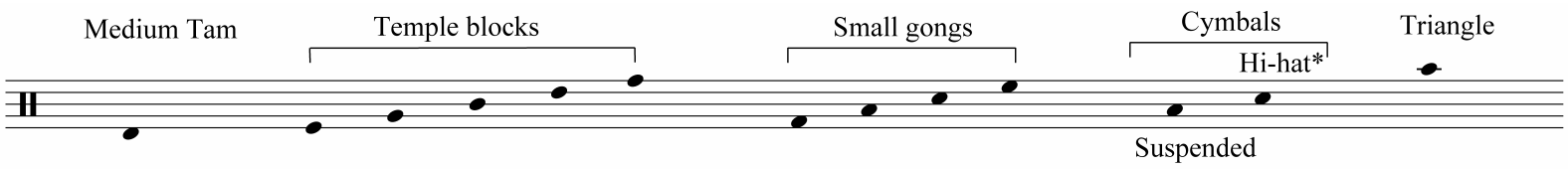
Player 3

Mark Tree (M. Tr.)
Small Tam-tam (S. Tam)
*Large Tam-tam (L. Tam)
Crash Cymbals (Cr. Cymb)
Snare Drum (S. Dr.)
4 Tom-toms (T-t)
Bass Drum (Bs. Dr.)

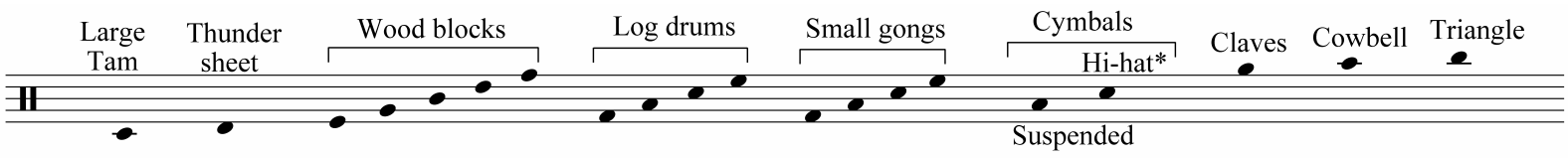
*Denotes an instrument that may be shared with another player, if necessary.

<u>Unpitched Percussion Staff Layout</u>

Player 1

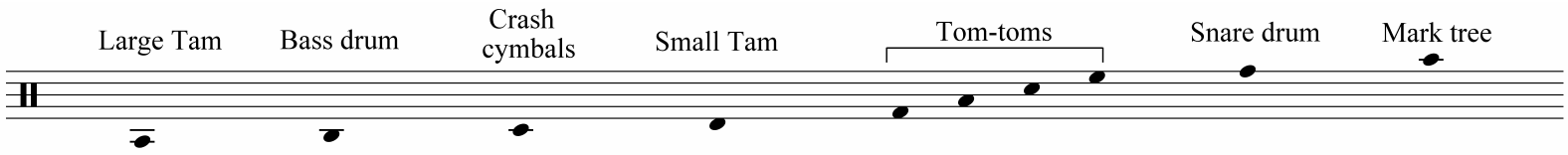


Player 2



*always in closed position unless otherwise specified

Player 3



Pictures of a working percussion setup can be provided upon request.

Ex Nihilo

Kris Peysen

Nascent

♩=48

Flute

Flute

Oboe

Tenor Saxophone

classical style

Violin

bow freely

Violoncello

Cymbals
scrape

Triangle

Small Gongs

Glockenspiel

Trgl

Percussion 1

Wood Blocks

Cymbals

Claves

Percussion 2

Large tam

Mark tree
stroke randomly with fingers

Tom-toms

Bass Drum
stick end

T-t

Percussion 3

9

A

Fl.

Ob.

Ten. Sax.

Vln.

Vc.

Medium tamtam

S. G.

M. Tam

Glsp

Trgl

Per. 1

W. Bl.

Log drum

W. Bl.

Perc.2

Bs. Dr.
(stick end)

T-t

Per. 3

B

With driving motion

♩=176

18

Fl.
Ob.
Ten. Sax.
Vln.
Vc.
Per. 1
Perc.2
Per. 3

pizz.
arco
Xylophone
M. Tr.
Bs. Dr.
T-t mallets
legato
Cymb

27

sim.
W. Bl.
Trgl

C

37

Bs. Dr.

D

43

Fl.
Ob.
Ten. Sax.
Vln.
Vc.
Per. 1
Perc.2
Per. 3

T-t

E

51

F

62

W. Bl.

Cymb

73

Fl.
Ob.
Ten. Sax.
Vln.
Vc.
Per. 1
Perc.2
Per. 3

pizz
arco

85

G

to Chm
W. Bl.
to Glsp

94

103

H

Fl.
Ob.
Ten. Sax.
Vln.
Vc.
Per. 1
Perc.2
Per. 3

mp mf p mp f ff

111

I

Fl.
Ob.
Ten. Sax.
Vln.
Vc.
Per. 1
Perc.2
Per. 3

mf f mf mf

Glockenspiel

p

119

Reserved

J

♩=132

♪=♪(♩.=88)

Fl.
Ob.
Ten. Sax.
Vln.
Vc.
Per. 1
Perc.2
Per. 3

mp f f mf mf ff

l.v.

to W. Bl.

(Bs. Dr.)

mf

T-t

pp

128

Fl.
Ob.
Ten. Sax.
Vln.
Vc.
Per. 1
Perc.2
Per. 3

f *mf* *mp* *ppp*
pizz
mf
pizz
arco
p *mp* *mf* *mp*
Chimes
mp
p

140

K

f *mp* *ff*
mf *mp* *ff*
mf
p *ff*
f *pp*
p
Wood Blocks
p
mp *p*

149

f *mp*
mp
pizz
ff
pp
Ped.
mf
mf

156

(start fast and ritard into the new tempo)

L

Languorous

♩.=62 (♩=93)

Fl.

Ob.

Ten. Sax.

Vln.

Vc.

Per. 1

Perc.2

Per. 3

mf *ppp*

mp *ppp*

ff

fff

pp

arco

f

to T. Bl.

Temple Blocks

p

Large tam

Cymbals

Small Gongs

mp

pp

play with hands

Bs. Dr.

p

165

sempre espressivo

3

3

3

mf

Trgl

S. G.

Log Drum

p

mp

T-t

take mallets

Bs. Dr.

Snare Drum

pp

173

5

Cymbals

to M. Tam

pp

Bs. Dr.

p

S. Dr.

pp

180

Fl.
Ob.
Ten. Sax.
Vln.
Vc.
Per. 1
Perc.2
Per. 3

Medium Tam-tam
Cymb
T-t

184 accel.

M

Trgl
Clv
Small Gongs
l.v.
S. Dr.

189 ♩=120

snares off
(S.G.)
Cymbals
accel. gliss.

N

Mechanical

194

Fl.

Ob.

Ten. Sax.

Vln.

Vc.

Per. 1

Perc.2

Per. 3

mp *f* *mf*

pp *f* *p*

pp *mf* *p*

non vib.

con vib.

mf *p*

pizza

mf

Xylophone

pp *f* *mp*

p *f* *p*

p

Small Tam-tam

pp

S. Dr.

beat sticks together

mp *ff*

(snares off)

pp

O

With sudden blossoming

accel. poco a poco.

201 ♩.=76

Fl.

Ob.

Ten. Sax.

Vln.

Vc.

Per. 1

Perc.2

Per. 3

legato sempre

mf

f *ff*

7:4

arco

f

mf

p

Tom-toms

mp

p

P

Frantic

♩.=84

210

Fl.

Ob.

Ten. Sax.

Vln.

Vc.

Per. 1

Perc.2

Per. 3

mp

f

8va

f

f

mp

mp

(Xyl)

ff

mf

219

Fl.
Ob.
Ten. Sax.
Vln.
Vc.
Per. 1
Perc.2
Per. 3

mp f ff mf
8va
fff
(loco)
fmp
Wood Blocks

226

rit.
(Optional) take jazz mouthpiece
(8)

Q
Heavily
233 ♩=100

jazz style
pp
(Tom) to L. Tam
(S. Tam)
Large tam-tam

241

R

Fl.
Ob.
Ten. Sax.
Vln.
Vc.
Per. 1
Perc.2
Per. 3

mp
pp
4:3
f
mf
ff
n
to S. G.
to T-t
Tom-toms

248

Small Gongs
l.v.
(W. Bl.)

S

Straining

253

♩=160

S. Tam
Glockenspiel
Cowbell
triangle beater
Bs. Dr.

T

261

Fl.
Ob.
Ten. Sax.
Vln.
Vc.
Per. 1
Perc.2
Per. 3

8va

mf
mf
p
ff
f
mf
mp
fp
fp
fp
pizz
f
Xylophone
mp
to L. Tam
T-t
mf

U

With furious momentum

♩=176 (subito)

270

(8)

f
mp
f
p
f
mf
f
fp
fp
mf
p
f
mp
f
arco
mf
f
mp
f
Large Tam-tam
pp
mp
Thunder sheet
strike in center with mallet
ff
−mp
mf

280

mf
f
mp
ff
mf
mp
f
mf
f
mp
f
Wood Blocks
mf
to Cr. Cymb

290

V

With resolved purpose

♩=160

rit.

Fl.

Ob.

Ten. Sax.

Vln.

Vc.

Per. 1

Perc.2

Per. 3

f

ff

Glockenspiel

Crash cymbals

mp

300

W

To Picc.

p

mf

pp

pp`

Small gongs

Log drum

Wood Blocks

to Bs. Dr.

Bass Drum

311

Piccolo

Xylophone
(duple feel)

318

To Fl.

Fl.
Ob.
Ten. Sax.
Vln.
Vc.
Per. 1
Perc.2
Per. 3

f
ff
mf
ff
ff
ff
f

326

X

Flute

ff
f
ff
f
Tom-toms
mf

335

accel.

♩=176

Y

f
ff
ff
mp
f
p
f
mf
f
mf
f p
mp
Cymbals
f
mp
mf
p

343

Fl.
Ob.
Ten. Sax.
Vln.
Vc.
Per. 1
Perc.2
Per. 3

ff
fff
ff
f
mp f mp f
mp f mp f 3
mf

351

Z

To Picc.

Piccolo

lay stick on cymbal and strike it (like a rim shot)

mf
f

Frenzied

361

mf
f
ff
ff
accel. gliss
mp
f
mf

370

Fl.
Ob.
Ten. Sax.
Vln.
Vc.
Per. 1
Perc.2
Per. 3

(Cymb)

f

379

AA

♩=48 (Tempo 1)

fff
ff
mp *fff*
mf
p *f*

388

To Fl.

fff
f
ff
Small gongs
Bs. Dr.
Cymbals
to Th. S.
mp

BB

rit. **♩=52 (With slightly more momentum)**

399

Flute *dolce*

Fl. *mp* *mf* *mp*

Ob. *dolce* *f* *mf* *ff* > *pp* *p* *mp* *p* *p*

Ten. Sax. (Optional) take classical mouthpiece *f* *mf* *ff* > *pp*

Vln. *dolce* *mp* *p* *mp* > *pp* *mp* *mf* *mp*

Vc. *dolce* *p* > *ppp* *p* *mf* > *pp* *pp* *p* *mp* *p*

(Xyl) to Glsp

Per. 1 *p*

Perc.2 Thunder sheet shake gently *p*

Per. 3

CC

413

Fl. *n*

Ob. *pp* *n*

Ten. Sax. *classical style* *p* *n* *ppp*

Vln. *p* *pp* pizz *mf*

Vc. *pp* *n* *p* *mf*

Glockenspiel l.v. to Chm

Per. 1 to Clv *pp*

Perc.2 *n* Large Tam to S. Dr.

Per. 3 *pp*

422

Fl.

Ob. *pp* *n*

Ten. Sax. *pp* *n*

Vln. *p*

Vc. *ppp*

Per. 1

Perc.2

Per. 3 Snare Drum *ppp* *p* *n*

DD

Stillness

430 ♩=48

Fl.
Ob.
Ten. Sax.
Vln.
Vc.
Per. 1
Perc.2
Per. 3

mf
p
Chimes
lock pedal and let ring throughout
mf
Claves
p
Trgl
pp
ppp
Cymb
p *mp* *pp*
Mark tree
stroke with fingers
pp
T-t
p
S. Dr.
pp *p* *ppp*

440

Fl.
Ob.
Ten. Sax.
Vln.
Vc.
Per. 1
Perc.2
Per. 3

mf
arco
mf
mf
Log drum
pp
Wood Blocks
p
T-t
pp *p*
S. Dr.
p
n
pp *7*

445

Fl.
Ob.
Ten. Sax.
Vln.
Vc.
Per. 1
Perc.2
Per. 3

mp *f*
mf *ff* *n*
pp *mp*
p *f* *n*
Small Gongs
pp
ppp
Large Tam-tam
ppp *ff*
(no attack)
n
dampen if needed to achieve an even diminuendo
Bs. Dr.
p
pp *mp*
(hard beater)
p
pp